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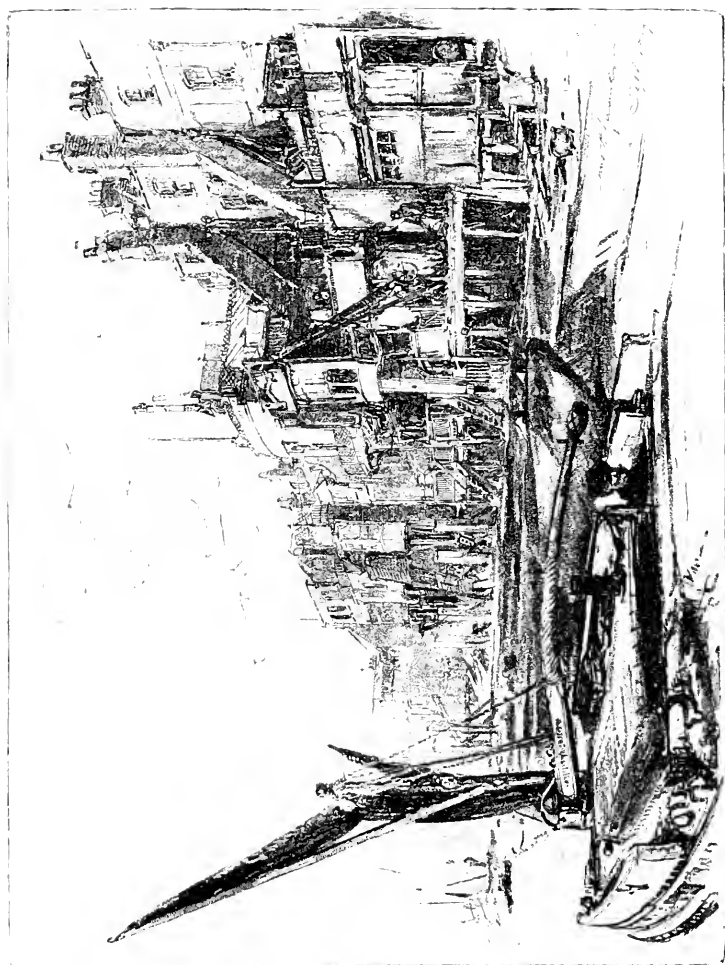
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LIMEHOUSE SIDE.

# ABOUT ENGLAND WITH DICKENS

BY

ALFRED RIMMER

AUTHOR OF

RAMBLER ROUND ETON AND HARROW, 'OUR OLD COUNTRY TOWNS, ETC.



WITH FIFTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS

BY C. A. VANDERHOOF, ALFRED RIMMER, AND OTHERS

London  
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY  
1883

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# ABOUT ENGLAND WITH DICKENS.

## CHAPTER I.

### DAVID COPPERFIELD.



THE ROOKERY, BLUNDERSTONE, SUFFOLK.

*DAVID COPPERFIELD* is the favourite work of Dickens. He says in the preface: "It would concern the reader little,

perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two years' imaginative task, or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some portion of himself into the shadowy world when a crowd of the creatures

of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet I had nothing else to tell, unless, indeed, I were to confess (which might be of less moment still) that no one can ever believe this narrative in the reading more than I believed it in the writing. Of all my books I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can love that family as dearly as I love them. But like many fond parents I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child, and his name is David Copperfield." This work has sometimes been called an autobiography of the author, and in a certain sense this is correct, for, though the incidents may differ from those which actually befell him, they have something in common with his history, and the feelings of childhood are painted evidently from his own recollection. For Yarmouth and its neighbourhood, where the first scenes are laid, "Dickens always had a great fondness. He says, speaking of Yarmouth, that if any one had a grudge against any particular insurance company, the best way to gratify it would be to purchase a heavy life annuity and then retire to Yarmouth, drawing the dividends regularly; and he says that finally the insurance would conclude that "they had got either Old Parr or Methuselah in their books."

Blunderstone is situated about seven or eight miles from Yarmouth, but there is a station at Lowestoft, which is only about half that distance. The living is a rectory, and that a wealthy one. It combines Flixton with it,

and the united population of the two parishes, which cover a vast district, is less than a thousand, according to the clerical directory.

Blunderstone is pronounced Blundstone or "Blunston" by the inhabitants, and it is just one of those pleasant quiet country villages that Dickens would have been likely to select for a tale so full of homely recollections as *David Copperfield*. The cottages in it are detached, and if they are not of large dimensions they are charming to look at. Red brick is the material that has commonly been used in their construction, and this is often covered over with green creepers and ivy. Sometimes a white-washed or yellow-washed house breaks in and adds a little variety to the small village street. The cottages are shut off from the road by high thorn and holly hedges, and are often only seen through the white wicket-gate. Importers of wine and spirits have apparently found many customers for their empty pipes and hogsheads, as one of these vessels generally figures at the corner of a dwelling. But there are a goodly number of pumps, and wells with quaint old winches, or even more primitive cans fixed on long poles. Beehives flourish here; and I saw on the walls between Yarmouth and Blunderstone many placards announcing that prizes of £100 were to be given away to the most successful of bee-keepers. As we pass through the village towards the church which Dickens has made immortal, we hear at intervals the hum of bees, and it seems in sweet harmony with the scene. And then

Blunderstone is a perfect show-ground for roses ; there are standard roses including most of the varieties from the Duke of Edinburgh to "China Tea" roses, and another class, which some might consider equally as charming as either—the old-fashioned cabbage rose that seems to thrive in a half-neglected garden, and sheds almost bushels of sweet-scented leaves while the younger buds are coming to maturity. The counterpart to Mr. Barkis might easily be found at Blunderstone, and the wish to sit up all night is natural in David Copperfield when he obtained his mother's permission to go and see old Mr. Peggotty and the memorable house on the sands. "The day soon came for our going. It was such an early day that it came soon, even to me, who was in a fever of expectation, and half afraid that an earthquake, or a fiery mountain, or some other great convulsion of nature, might interpose to stop the expedition. We were to go in a carrier's cart that started in the morning, after breakfast. I would have given any money to have been allowed to wrap myself up over night and sleep in my hat and boots." This is exceedingly natural ; the writer can well remember, when he was about the same age as David, stopping in a farm-house in a remote part of Lancashire, and it was decided that he should return to Liverpool, about fifteen miles away, in the Saturday's market-cart, which left at two o'clock in the morning. The romance of such a conveyance was enchanting. To get up at one, and have breakfast, and then to climb into the covered vehicle, and



see the sun rise, as the strong heavy horse tramped slowly through the lanes, was perfect bliss.

Little did Copperfield suppose that he was leaving his happy home for ever behind him, and that when he returned all would be completely changed. "I am glad to recollect," he says, "that when the carrier's cart was at the gate, and my mother stood there kissing me, a grateful fondness for her and for the old place I had never turned my back upon before made me cry." Necessity knows no law, even in house property. When Queen Elizabeth<sup>1</sup> wanted the Bishop of Ely's mansion in Holborn for her chancellor, the prelate had to yield. He may have protested; indeed, he does seem to have derived what consolation he could in that direction, but his protest was not far from costing him very dearly. As for the house that is represented here as Copperfield's birthplace and early home, I should almost doubt if the family who lived there did very closely resemble the Copperfield household, but as it is the only house visible from the churchyard on any side, it must be appropriated, and one has the less hesitation in doing this from the circumstance that it corresponds with what we require. "On the ground floor is Peggotty's kitchen, opening into a back yard, with a pigeon-house on a pole in the centre without any pigeons in it, a great dog kennel in a corner without any dog, and a quantity of fowls that looked terribly at me, walking about in a menacing, ferocious manner."

When I visited Blunderstone it was on a glorious

summer day in the third week of August ; the cottages were closed and the street deserted. A country waggon with garden produce had stopped before a little public-house, and the driver was probably sheltering inside for a short time from the rays of the sun, while his horse was slaking his thirst from a trough of clear well-water on the outside of the hostelry. This was almost the only sign of life that was apparent to the eye. Harvest had begun and everybody was at work in the fields, and the summer air that carried the sweet scent from the meadows, brought with it the hum of labourers, and the distant sound of the reaping machines. It was just a day to delight in, and I thought that it was such a one as poor Mrs. Copperfield and David would have spent from morning to night out of doors. A loud and most bellicose crowing roused me from my reverie, and, on turning round, there was a huge barn-door cock standing on the top of a gate. He most certainly wanted to see who I was, and appeared to think I should be in the fields working. I remembered a passage in *Copperfield*, which I referred to after arriving home, "There is one cock who gets on a post to crow, and seems to take particular notice of me as I look at him through the kitchen window, who makes me shiver, he is so fierce ;" and I fancy this must certainly be a descendant. The geese were at the edges of the stubbles ; there were only one or two in the village, and they would seem unhappily to have followed the example of the waggoner in their tastes. Instead of joining their fellows

on the stubbles, so as to make a respectable show on Michaelmas day at Yarmouth market, they affected the neighbourhood of pumps, and when water had been drawn they made small drinking parties round the pools that had collected on the pavement. Their ancestors seem to have surely troubled Copperfield in his youthful days—"Of the geese outside the side-gate who come waddling after me, with their long necks outstretched, when I go that way I dream at night, as a man environed by wild beasts might dream of lions."

The interior of the house is graphically described: "Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front-door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don't know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there with a dimly-burning light, letting a mouldy air come out at the door, in which there is a smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee, all at one whiff." Then Dickens speaks of the two parlours. The dimensions of the house are enlarged since *Copperfield* was written, but doubtless these could be traced yet. The parlour they sit in of an evening has most charms for David. They use the best one on Sundays, but Peggotty, his nurse, has told him something about his father's funeral, when they all assembled in it in black, and put on mourning, and this has given him an antipathy to the room; and when his mother one night read about Lazarus and

the raising of the dead, Copperfield was so frightened when he went to his room that, as he says, "they are afterwards obliged to take me out of bed and show me the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon."

Blunderstone church is small, but it is an exceedingly interesting building. It seems to have been principally built in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and the tracery in the windows has a French appearance, not at all unlike some we may see in Normandy. There is a very peculiar round tower which is ancient, and quite unlike any other I remember to have seen in England. It seems unproportionably small, and it is not in the middle of the gable, but stands on one side. The grass in the yard is certainly very green and healthy, and the white and red gravestones are all in excellent preservation. One or two sheep had found their way into the consecrated ground, and were calmly enjoying the rich pasturage. This is almost *verbatim* with the text—"There is nothing half so green that I know of anywhere as the grass of that churchyard; nothing half so shady as its trees; nothing half so quiet as its tombstones. The sheep are feeding there when I kneel up, early in the morning, in my little bed in a closet within my mother's room, to look out at it, and I see the red light shining on the sundial, and think within myself, 'Is the sun-dial glad, I wonder, that it can tell the time again?'" Unfortunately

the old oak Hanoverian and Queen Anne pews, which used to form such a charm in country churches, have



BLUNDERSTONE CHURCH, SUFFOLK.

fared no better than their fellows in other parishes, and plain ugly open benches have taken their place, but when

*Copperfield* was written they were there. "Here is our pew in the church. What a high-backed pew! with a window near it, out of which the house can be seen, and is seen many times during the morning service by Peggotty, who likes to make herself as sure as she can that it's not being robbed or is not in flames."

The childish feelings and sympathies of *Copperfield* are among the best of Dickens's writings. When his eye wanders and his old nurse catches sight of it, and frowns that he must look at the clergyman, he is afraid almost that he will stop and inquire what induces him to stare so; then he looks at his mother, who pretends not to see him; and then at a boy in the aisle, who makes faces; and finally, overcome by the heat of the day and the monotony of the pastor's voice, he succumbs to drowsiness, and falls off his seat.

One thing struck me as curious; there seem to have been stray sheep coming in and out of the yard, and one of these almost made up its mind to enter the church. Now, exactly between the church and the house there is a pound for stray sheep. Did this suggest the idea?

The Suffolk lanes about here are dry and hardly leave traces of a shower; hence there are great numbers of butterflies. Red admirals and peacock butterflies and many others chase each other past the hedgerows. We read in *Copperfield*, "Now I am in the garden at the back, a very preserve of butterflies, as I remember it." There is a small lane near Blunderstone, that leads to a

stile-road across some fields, that is very curious. It is not more than six feet wide. The path in the middle of it has become evenly lowered, and forms a segment. The thorns on each side of the narrow road are planted very closely together, and meet in a perfect curve of dense foliage overhead, forming with the roadway a perfect circle, and as the little lane is straight, it conveys the idea of a long tube through which the light is shining at the other end. So completely do the leaves over-canopy it that thrushes, or mavishes as they are called there, and wood-pigeons do not stir till the pedestrian is under their perch, and then they fly with a flutter and loud chirpings, quite unseen from below.

This lane is on the road to Yarmouth, or at least on one of the roads, for there are several, and they are all of nearly equal length. To revert to the memorable journey. The horse—the carrier's horse—was the "laziest in the world," and Barkis dropped sleepily forward, leaving his steed to find the way,—the route that his cart took is clearly the highway through Hopton, and by Hopland Hall. On this road we see just such bylanes as he speaks of, and the surface undulates in the manner he describes. Then Yarmouth is seen a long way off, and looks flat and oozy for a long time before it is reached, and on the other roads we see very little of the flat lands. "As we drew nearer, and saw the whole adjacent prospect lying in a straight low line under the sky, I hinted to Peggotty that a mound or so might have improved it;

also that if the land had been more separated from the sea, and the town and the tide had not been quite so mixed up together, like toast and water, it would have been nicer—sentiments in which the dame who said she was proud to call herself a ‘Yarmouth Bloater’ did not concur.” “Here’s my Am! grewed out of knowledge,” she at last exclaimed, as they reached Yarmouth. Ham was waiting for them at the public-house, where the Blunderstone carrier put up. He asked David how he found himself, and David imagined he must have known him much better than he knew Ham; and the visitor to Yarmouth who arrives there for the first time will be surprised to see how many Peggottys and how many Hams there are in the streets, especially when the boats have returned from fishing, though at any state of the tide there is no lack of them. Ham, who was now six feet high and robust in proportion, took Copperfield on his shoulders to the boat-house of world-wide fame. It no longer exists, but there was such a building at the time when *Copperfield* was written, and the inhabitants remember it well. It stood right away on the open beach below Yarmouth, and a short description of its locality might throw some light upon the most popular work of Dickens.

Just where Norfolk and Suffolk join stands the ancient town whose name is almost synonymous in most parts of England with bloaters. The Waveny divides these counties, and joins the Yare, which is a Norfolk river, and flows through the old capital of Norwich. These streams



join, on their way to the German Ocean, through a broad pool called Breyden Water ; and this again contracts at Yarmouth, and flows through a contracted channel to the sea. It is with this channel we have to deal now.

From the bridge, which is called Southtown Bridge, and which joins the counties, the united streams have a course of three miles from Yarmouth to the sea. A tongue of land which averages about half a mile in width, and which is formed of silt and deposit, has gradually risen along the German Ocean, and on this tongue was situated the home of the Peggottys. The notes which I made as I went to this strip of land show how Dickens wrote everything down as he saw it. There were many timber yards,—some filled with square timber, and others with the knotted trunks of elm for ships' knees,—and between these were cottages with tiled roofs. The tiles were nearly always of the continental type that are set picturesquely in gutters, and overlap each other. Nearly all of these cottages had gardens, and they were well filled with flowers and vegetables, all of which were the pictures of health. Then there were shipbuilders' yards, with pots of boiling tar, and neat, trim cutters on the stocks that seemed fit to ride over any seas. There has been a great improvement in cutters since Copperfield's time, and some I saw on the stocks might very well compete for cups at the Harwich regatta. This description well corresponds with that we find in Dickens. "Ham carrying me on his back, and a small box of ours under his arm, and Peggotty

carrying another small box of ours, we turned down lanes bestrewn with bits of chips, and little hillocks of sand, and went past gasworks, rope-walks, boat-builders' yards, ship-wrights' yards, ship-breakers' yards, caulkers' yards, riggers' lofts, smiths' forges, and a great litter of such places, until we came out upon the dull waste I had already seen at a distance."

There is another road from Blunderstone to Yarmouth which the country carrier often takes, and it is more beautiful than the one through which *Barkis* and *Copperfield* went on the morning which was the precursor of such trouble in after years ; and if any one meditates a pilgrimage to these parts, it may be well to describe it, for I found some slight difficulty in procuring correct information. Partly this was owing to the circumstance that about four out of five people one met were strangers, and a large proportion of the others were seafarers or fishermen. Supposing that we are staying in Yarmouth we cross over a bridge which is called *South-town*, and we see an announcement that trams run to *Half-way House* and *Gorleston* every fifteen minutes. It was through *Gorleston* that the journey described was made, and this is two miles from the starting-point of the tramway. If, however, we desire to take the other way, we must disembark at *Half-way House*, and there we pass through a place called *Browston Green*, and over a very picturesque rustic bridge, below which is a very sluggish stream or canal, that is lost on each side of the bridge in high flags

and bulrushes ; but we really are in the middle of a large duck decoy, which is so carefully concealed that there is no wonder that immense numbers of ducks are annually taken. This is called Fritton decoy, and the lake must be nearly two miles in length, of which the cutting we pass forms a small part. The lanes in this part are well shaded, and they would have delighted Gainsborough or Creswick. The distances along each road are about equal. Dickens was well acquainted with both of them, and spent many pleasant days in wandering under the branches that overhang them.

So many scenes in *Copperfield* are laid at Yarmouth, that a short description of the town may not be quite out of place. It is very ancient, and it was formerly surrounded with walls. Changes have continually passed over it, and many of the old features have left it. Still there is abundant employment both for the antiquary and the artist in the compact old town. The principal industry is of course the herring-fishery, and this would naturally be what occupied the principal part of Peggotty's and Ham's time during the season, which commences in September. But they dealt also in other inhabitants of the deep. Copperfield told his nurse in confidence that the house smelt so strongly of fish that if he took out his handkerchief, it smelt exactly as if it had wrapped up a lobster ; and then he learned that Peggotty caught them for sale in Yarmouth, and he afterwards found a large number of lobsters and crabs and cray-fish, in an out-

house in a wonderful state of conglomeration, and always pinching whatever they could get hold of. Saturday is the great day for Yarmouth ; and in the busy season, when the environs of the town are well filled, and the lodging-houses are reaping their harvest, it is a day to be remembered. Yarmouth market-place is open, and it is probably the largest in England ; the "market-square" it is called, though it is most irregular in shape and very much longer than it is broad. On one side, near the great church, which looks out on the square, is a boulevard of lime and elm trees. They have not attained any great growth, and at first would seem to be hardly more than half a century old. I asked an old verger if he could remember their being planted, but he said that they were as they are at present as far back as his memory could reach. "And how far is that, friend?" I asked. "Seventy-seven years come Michaelmas," he replied ; and I could not help recalling the eulogium that Dickens passed upon Yarmouth as a place that was conducive to longevity, for the verger certainly did not appear to be more than sixty or sixty-five years old.

The vast market square is surrounded with a very quaint assemblage of houses that would almost seem to have been designed with no other aim than irregularity ; no two adjoining are of the same height, and if there is a yellow-washed one, its neighbour is sure to be white or gray or dark-red brick. Some of them have a bow-window their whole width which runs up to the roof, and a few

have old-fashioned wrought-iron balconies, from where there is an excellent view over the great square. Gable lights appear in the steep roofs here and there, and there are many stacks of great brick chimneys that must have caused much anxiety during the storm which forms almost the closing scene of *Copperfield*, and which is a graphic and vivid description of a terrible storm that actually occurred during a visit of Dickens to his favourite resort.

Any one who has been accustomed to see a covered market like those in London and Liverpool and Manchester will be rather surprised at the readiness with which a vacant space of two or three acres is literally roofed in, and all this has happened between Friday night and Saturday morning. There are seven rows of booths, each of which is protected from the weather, and different trades seem to cluster together—the butchers and vegetable-dealers keeping as separate as possible from each other's quarters ; and on the lower side of the market there is a long row of stalls for shell-fish, and dried herrings, and Finnan haddies. At the extreme end of the market-place is a dining-room, two stories high, that has a great bow-window overlooking the square, and generally is very busy on Saturdays and Wednesdays from twelve o'clock till three. Genuine Yarmouth bloaters may be had in this market, as indeed they may in the principal fish shops of the town ; and it would seem as if some natural taste of the inhabitants lay in curing herrings, and as though this

natural taste had developed in many generations into an exquisite talent.

The fishing grounds of Yarmouth are of very great extent. They reach for fifty to sixty miles along the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, and extend for nearly forty miles to seaward. The depth of water varies from ten to twenty fathoms.

On the tongue of land where Peggotty's house is situated is a lofty column erected in honour of Lord Nelson, who was born not far from here.

When Copperfield in early youth came to Yarmouth on his road to London to continue his education at Mr. Creakle's academy he went in the carrier's cart across South-town bridge, and to stay at an inn that was so new to him that he says: "I at once abandoned a latent hope I had had of meeting with some of Mr. Peggotty's family there, perhaps even little Em'ly herself.

"The coach was in the yard, shining very much all over, but without any horses to it as yet; and it looked in that state as if nothing was more unlikely than its ever going to London." The inn where this occurred was the Crown and Anchor, the place where Dickens used to stay; but it is much altered now, and though the actual inn remains as it was, a long bar-room has been projected in front towards the street.

When the coach left for London it travelled back over the same road, or nearly the same road, that Copperfield had just traversed in the journey from Blunderstone, which

village it left a mile on the right hand, while it pursued its course towards London through Lowestoft, Saxmundham, and Ipswich. The town of Yarmouth, that Dickens so delighted in, was only just entered, and it would have required a walk of ten minutes or more to reach the market-place and to make an exploration of even a few of the wynds or "rows," as they are called down there. These are the very narrowest of passages that remain in England, and they connect the four principal streets of the old town. Guide-books say that there are a hundred and fifty of them ; but whether this number is accurate or not I cannot exactly say ; at any rate it is very great. Some of them are so narrow that it seems unaccountable why they should ever have been built. Dickens is said to have enumerated some three or four where two friends he would undertake to select could not possibly pass each other, but, if they did happen by ill fate to meet, one would have to turn round or back-out and shelter in the first yard with an open door till his friend had left the row clear. There are certainly not a few where a boy of ten or twelve years of age could, without the least difficulty, put a hand on each wall of the row ; and yet the buildings are not squalid or particularly small. They are of stone and brick, and among them are shops with various kinds of provisions or wearing apparel, and with the inevitable Yarmouth bloaters strung up in rows. Sometimes there are yard walls, and in these may occasionally be seen the tarred fishing-nets for deep-sea fisheries, and boat-hooks,

and lobster-pots, and many baskets, showing at once the calling of the occupant; and in one or two dwellings, where a door was open, there was a fireplace and groups of fishermen or their friends round a fire, and the whole scene looked so like a Dutch kitchen of the most picturesque type that Ostade or Teniers would have found it abundantly worthy of their pencil.

The new part of Yarmouth that faces the sea is like Brighton or St. Leonards, or any other watering-place. There are terraces of excellent houses, with bow-windows, glazed with plate glass, and thrown back from the roadway by small gardens, in which, as a general rule, every colour of the rainbow, and some colours that were never seen in it, are abundantly represented. It would not be doing even scanty justice to dismiss Yarmouth without some further reference to the bloater, and the fisheries that occupied Ham and Peggotty. The class of boats they used to employ has nearly disappeared from the scene, though some of them may be found high and dry on the Suffolk coast, and even yet, inland, parts of them are utilised as outhouses or stores. We cannot walk very far outside Yarmouth without coming across many such relics, and some of them are so convenient that they look as if they had almost been fashioned, instead of merely adapted for their use.

The boats, when they are on the trawling-ground, are under the command of an admiral or some experienced fisherman, who directs them in their trawling operations



and receives some extra pay for his labour. Fast cutters go out to meet them and bring the take to Yarmouth. A steamer is always in readiness to tow these cutters in, and as all those belonging to one owner carry the same flag, they are not difficult to distinguish and collect together. The herring has more enemies than any other created being in the universe. If we look at a map of Suffolk we shall see the immense sand-banks that lie outside the coast covering hundreds of miles. All these are vast spawning-grounds for herrings, and they attract nearly all the fish of the ocean. The dog-fish, the hake, the cod, and nearly every other that swims through the water, preys upon the herring at some state of its existence, and yet the powers of reproduction are so great that no diminution is or can be made in the supply. It has been computed that the nets used by the Scotch and Yarmouth fishermen are ten thousand miles in length, yet the quantity captured by the hand of man is literally as dust in the balance if compared with those which are consumed by other fishes, and in some stages of their existence even by their own species; and it is well it is so, otherwise the herring would probably disappear from the earth. When we consider that the roe of a single herring, if allowed to arrive at maturity, would produce fish that weighed between four and five tons, we can easily understand that some parasitical growth or some law of nature would step in, and the herring would become a thing of the past.

When Peggotty told Copperfield—who wanted a few

hills about to improve the landscape, and suggested several physical alterations—that “we must take things as we find them, and that for her part she was proud to call herself a Yarmouth Bloater, she not only used a word that is commonly applied to inhabitants or natives of the great fishing town, but she actually was making allusion to the coat of arms of the town. Formerly these were three bloaters, one over the other, but in consequence of the services which the inhabitants rendered to Edward III. during the French wars, he conferred upon them the inestimable privilege of dividing the bloater in two, and fitting on the latter half to the head and shoulders of the British lion, powers being also granted to the herald to represent the moiety of bloater in what is called by sculptors “heroic size.”

The visitor to Yarmouth will notice many red-brick buildings something like the stunted hop towers in Kent, and these are the drying-houses for Yarmouth bloaters. When the herrings have really come to Yarmouth, which may be calculated on in September or the end of August, the great harvest begins, and boats that have been out cruising for seven or eight weeks at a time close into the old town, and are only away from the herring wharf for about two or three tides. A dark night suits their purpose best, because the fish cannot then see the nets, for even with herrings the net may be set in vain in their sight. Early in the morning it is exceedingly interesting to watch the boats moored alongside the wharf and discharging their silvery freight. The herrings lie in the rays

of the rising sun brighter than any silver plate, however well burnished, and the heaps are enormous. If a very benevolent moralist begins to think that all these shoals were cleaving the tides of the German Ocean but yesterday, he may console himself with the reflection that their end was quite momentary, and a surprise, possibly a pleasant one, or, at any rate, we do not know anything to the contrary—they were free from pain and forecasting of their fate.

“The sense of death is most in apprehension ;  
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,  
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great  
As when a giant dies.”

The Yarmouth bloater can only be known in perfection in its native town. The so-called bloaters that can be purchased anywhere in England, and will keep in the same condition as they are when we purchase them for many days, bear no comparison to the genuine Yarmouth bloater. This blooms only for a very brief period, and it almost involves a journey to the great seat of the industry to taste it in perfection. The very finest and primest fish are selected from the baskets, and these are strung together along a stick through the gills. These sticks are placed in rows, one above another, to a considerable height. Plenty of hands are employed, so that the salt water fragrance hardly has time to leave the fish, and an oak log is lighted below, and left to smoulder. The curing lasts some eighteen or twenty-four hours, and then the fish, which are as carefully watched by skilled hands as is the fermentation

at a Burton brewery, are sent into consumption. The finest of course must remain on the spot, or else be shipped to some neighbouring town like Lowestoft, and the shipments for London or Birmingham or Liverpool have to be salted in some degree, and dried a little more than those required for home consumption. It is not at all an impossibility that any one with friends, or friends' friends, in Yarmouth might be able to secure the shipment of a box which would cost in Yarmouth about 3s. 6d. for some fifty fish, I think that is the number, and if he waited the arrival of the train, and allowed no time to elapse, he might partly know what a bloater is ; but the glory of it is evanescent, and the natives look on it as

"The snow-fall on the river,  
One moment white, and passed for ever."

Omer and Joram's place at Yarmouth, where poor Copperfield went on his road from the school at Blackheath to attend his mother's funeral, is easily identified.

There is an old-fashioned shop at the corner of a row, miscalled Broad Row, that precisely corresponds with the description, and singularly enough it is used as a clothing establishment, and in silver letters on a black board inside the shop is the announcement, "Funerals furnished." Here the cheerful family of Omer passed their days, and, if we cannot say that their occupation was conducive to merriment, it seems to have no effect in damping their spirits ; nor does this necessarily imply any want of feeling, perhaps in some measure it might argue the reverse.

“‘Well, how do you get on, Minnie?’ Mr. Omer asked his daughter.

“‘We shall be ready by the trying-on time,’ she said, without looking up, ‘Don’t you be afraid, father.’

“Mr. Omer took off his broad-brimmed hat, and sat down and panted. He was so fat that he was obliged to pant some time before he could say :

“‘That’s right.’

“‘Father!’ said Minnie, playfully, ‘what a porpoise you do grow!’

“‘Well, I don’t know how it is, my dear,’ he replied, considering. ‘I *am* rather so.’

“‘You are such a comfortable man ; you take things so easy,’ Minnie rejoined.

“And Mr. Omer added, ‘No use taking ’em otherwise, my dear.’

“And when Minnie added, ‘We’re all pretty gay here,’” Copperfield was sorely puzzled. Yet Minnie was the kindest hearted of girls, and when poor Copperfield lay down on the sofa, not able to touch his breakfast, “she put away his hair from his forehead with a kind soft touch ;” and when Mr. Omer subsequently said, “Would you like to see your ——,” Minnie quickly stopped him with “No, father.” It was of course the coffin they spoke of. When they drove to Blunderstone, and at the funeral, Copperfield was shocked out of all propriety at the seeming happiness of Minnie and her lover, Mr. Joram, and though it was not hilarious by any

means, he wondered that a judgment did not overtake them.

The common expression, "as solemn as an undertaker," must be considered as applying only to the professional look which it becomes one to assume when he is on duty. In one of Dickens's works he speaks of one of these gentlemen who had made a felicitous remark on the uncertainty of life in some ante-room where preliminaries were being arranged, and he caught sight of his face in a glass opposite, but was shocked to see a broad smile upon it. And would their work be better done if they carried on their features the melancholy nature of their calling? The gloomy Hamlet says, "Has this fellow no feeling of his business, he sings at grave-making;" but Horatio reminds him that "Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness."

The drive from Yarmouth to Blunderstone and the scene in the churchyard are among the best descriptions in all Dickens's writings. "I do not think," poor David says, "I ever experienced so strange a feeling in my life as that of being with them, remembering how they had been employed, and seeing them enjoy the ride." The old man drove, and Minnie and her admirer sat behind. They stopped to bait the horse on the way, and this would be at Hopton, which lies nearly in the middle of the journey. There is a very pleasant country inn here that stands away back from the road, and before it is a long low trough full of clear water for horses and cattle. The old church,

which was thatched, stands some way above it ; and when *Copperfield* was written it was in perfect order, and an extremely interesting example of a country church ; but they tell us at the inn how the clerk overheated a flue, and the thatch caught fire, and soon the whole church was in a blaze, which left behind it only the tower and some portions of the walls ; but David could not touch anything, though they kindly enough offered whatever the inn could afford ; and when they arrived at the house he dropped out of the vehicle from behind, that he might get out of their company as soon as possible, and then he saw " those solemn windows, looking blindly on me like closed eyes once bright." Then the sabbath-like stillness of the day, the awe in the little village, the dreamy way in which he heard the clergyman beginning " I am the Resurrection and the Life," and the feeling of utter loneliness, are inimitably pictured.

" It is over, and the earth is filled in, and we turn to come away. Before us stands our house, so pretty and unchanged, so linked in my mind with the young idea of what is gone, that all my sorrow has been nothing to the sorrow it calls forth." And then he adds with inimitable pathos, " All this, I say, is yesterday's event. Events of later date have floated from me to the shore where all things forgotten will reappear, but this stands like a high rock in the ocean." After the funeral David becomes neglected ; Peggotty receives a month's warning ; and he says, " Happy would they have been, I dare say, if

they could have dismissed me at a month's warning too."

The next phase in Copperfield's life is his sojourn in London at Murdstone and Grinby's, and it would require a very old resident in London to remember the place as it was then. "It was down in Blackfriars. Modern improvements have altered the place; but it was the last house at the bottom of a narrow street, curving down hill to the river, with some stairs at the end, where people took boat." All this region has been so completely altered that it is almost impossible to select any place remotely like Murdstone and Grinby's. The Thames Embankment has made sweeping changes, though still there are several winding passages that lead down from Upper Thames Street, and which look very like the description of the narrow lane that Copperfield speaks of. "It was a crazy old house with a wharf of its own abutting on the water when the tide was in, and on the mud when the tide was out, and literally overrun with rats. Its panelled rooms, discoloured with the dirt and smoke of a hundred years, I dare say, its decaying floors and staircase, the squeaking and scuffling of old gray rats down in the cellars, and the dirt and rottenness of the place, are things, not many years ago, in my mind, but of the present instant." The shameful-ness of putting poor Copperfield to such a place, where his occupation was simply to wash bottles for the supply of ships going to India and America, was something shocking. His treat-



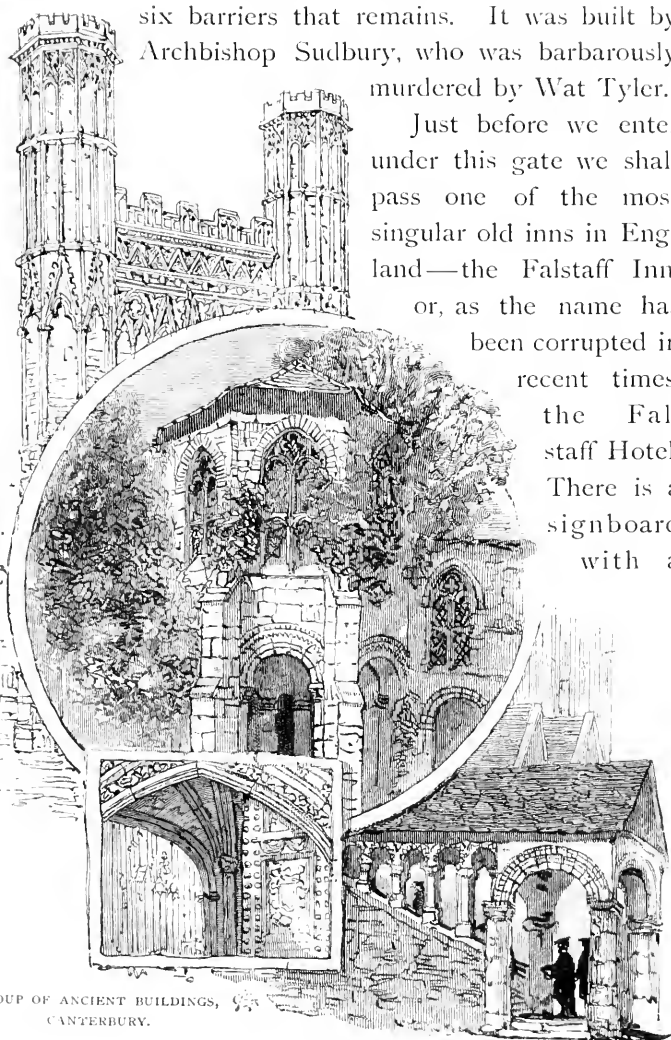
ment here was no better than if he had been an outcast, as indeed he was; but still he made the acquaintance of the immortal Micawber. There is little to represent pictorially in this part of *Copperfield*. The old warehouse has disappeared, and Windsor Terrace, the home of Micawber, is as commonplace and unpleasant to look at as can well be imagined. Micawber the mercurial could no more be sunk than a cork. "I have known him come home to supper with a flood of tears, and a declaration that nothing was now left but a jail; and go to bed making a calculation of the expense of putting bow-windows to the house, 'in case anything turned up,' which was his favourite expression." At last his troubles came to a crisis, as they were in the habit of doing periodically, and he went to the King's Bench Prison, Borough. All Copperfield's life is very sad here, until he decided to run away from Murdstone's employ, if such it can, by any straining of language, be so called. Being robbed by a youth in London, he had to make the best of his way on foot to Dover, to his aunt's, the resolute Betsey Trotwood, and he was compelled to part with his wearing apparel on the road. The distance is about seventy miles from London, and his road lay through Blackheath, where he sought his old school, Salem House, and secured one night's shelter under a haystack that was found in the old spot where he had before remembered one to be. Many of his old friends would be there then, but he got away in good time, and found the road which he had heard called

the Dover Road before Traddles or any of his old associates were stirring, and he pursued his weary footsore journey through Rochester to Chatham, where he slept near a gun and heard the sentry pacing backwards and forwards, and even felt that this was some kind of protection. Then he pursued his way through Milton and Faversham till he came to Canterbury, and finally arrived at Dover, where, with some difficulty, he succeeded in tracing out Betsey Trotwood's cottage. The district where this was situated is now entirely altered, and costly lodging-houses are to be seen instead. Miss Trotwood's house was not far from Dover Castle, which rises magnificently towards the sea at an abrupt elevation of between three and four hundred feet above the level of the water. The French coast is clearly visible at times from here, and whenever it is seen, rainy weather is not far off. Donkeys will always be found, and no doubt they trespass as much as the donkeys of Miss Trotwood's time did.

But the chief interest of Dover in *Copperfield* is its proximity to Canterbury. It was here that Copperfield went to complete his education, and find his partner for life. When it was settled that David must go to school in Canterbury, very little time was lost in preparation. David had become accustomed to his aunt's sudden ways, and said that he should like to go very much. The road lay past Broompath, the seat of the ancient family of Oxenden, and through a delightful country, entering the cathedral city by the west gate, which is the only one of the

six barriers that remains. It was built by Archbishop Sudbury, who was barbarously murdered by Wat Tyler.

Just before we enter under this gate we shall pass one of the most singular old inns in England—the Falstaff Inn, or, as the name has been corrupted in recent times, the Falstaff Hotel. There is a signboard with a



GROUP OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS,  
CANTERBURY.

picture of Sir John on it ; and this extends for an enormous distance into the street, supported by cast-iron rods turned into beautiful designs, such as we so often see in the ironwork of old towns, and even in some parts of London itself. Indeed, it would be well worth any one's time who may happen to visit some country town, after he has exhausted the sights—the church, or as much of interest as the Vandals of the present day have left after “restoring” it—the grammar school, the black-and-white market, and the curved gables or any other object that is a relic of past days—to walk through the streets and look at the wealth of wrought-iron designs he will find at street corners, or supporting signs or unused lamp brackets, or even railings. These just want a little looking out, and they are to be found nearly everywhere.

The Canterbury gateway has yet the grooves for a portcullis, and the two great towers remain with their battlements to guard the bridge over the left branch of the Stour, in whose waters the foundations are laid. When *Copperfield* was written there were some quaint old houses with gables and bow-windows, which are illustrated in Britton's *Picturesque Antiquities*.

When they arrived at Canterbury it was market-day, and it is not to be wondered at that the vehicle met with much obstruction in the narrow streets of that grand old cathedral city. Copperfield had endeavoured to obtain some information about Mr. Wickfield, to whose office his



FALSTAFF INN.



aunt was driving, but he only was able to learn that he was a lawyer, and not a schoolmaster at all ; and further inquiry was stopped by the arrival of David and his aunt at one of the quaintest and grandest cities in Europe. The Cathedral Close, with all the ancient piles that surround it, the Norman staircase of singular picturesqueness, the baptistery, the cloisters, and the venerable gateways, form a hundred groups of beauty that can never be forgotten, and an attempt has been made to incorporate these in a picture that would present itself to Copperfield. The chaise with the gray pony would seem to have fallen on rather evil days, as Miss Trotwood drove through the crowded streets of the city on a market-day. "My aunt had a great opportunity of insinuating the gray pony among carts, baskets, vegetables, and hucksters' goods. The hair-breadth turns and twists we made drew down upon us a variety of speeches from the people standing about, which were not always complimentary ; but my aunt drove on with perfect indifference, and I dare say would have taken her own way with as much coolness through an enemy's country ;" indeed to some extent this may have been converted into an enemy's country by the circumstances of the case.

When they finally arrived at Mr. Wickfield's house Copperfield had an opportunity to look about him. There is no such house now. I went again and again over the city to identify it, and even made a sketch of one house

that seemed to approach the descriptions most nearly ; but this would not answer the requirements, and so it was suppressed from the present series of sketches. But inhabitants tell me that such a house did exist, and that the description is accurate enough, but that it has been pulled down to make room for the premises of a bank. Another disappointment in this part of the work was that no trace could be found of the academy presided over by Dr. Strong, where Copperfield went to renew his long-neglected studies. This was "a grave building in a courtyard, with a learned air about it that seemed very well suited to the stray rooks and jackdaws who came down from the cathedral towers to walk with a clerkly bearing on the grass-plot." Then we read of "tall iron rails and gates outside the house ;" and almost at the top of the red-brick wall, at regular distances, were the well-known great stone urns "like sublimated skittles for time to play at."

There is a school in the Cathedral Close called King's school, and it was doubtless to this that Copperfield went, but the buildings are entirely different. The influence of Dr. Strong, the Principal of the school, is admirably told by Dickens ; and it must have been a grateful task, after describing such academies as Squeers' and Creakle's, to turn to this happy seminary, and to tell how well the Doctor's system of kindliness worked ! "The Doctor himself was the idol of the whole school : and it must have been a badly-composed school if he had been anything else, for he was the kindest of men ; with a simple



faith in him that might have touched the stone hearts of the very urns upon the wall."

In going with Dickens through England we must remember that he was a pioneer, and, just as the Yorkshire school system disappeared, many an abuse vanished after he had exposed it. *Copperfield* has been said in a literary review to be one of the most instructive books in the English language ; and if there are critics who think that Mr. Dick and Miss Mowcher might have been left out with advantage, there are none who can deny the brightness he gives to ways of virtue, and the gloom that he shows must follow deeds of cruelty and vice. "Adams, our head boy," who seems to have been of an arithmetical turn, did indeed calculate that the dictionary Dr. Strong was writing would take one thousand six hundred and forty-nine years, counting from his last birthday ; but Adams and his audience loved him none the less. Then there was a scandal that some beggar woman on a frosty day in winter did actually receive the gaiters of the benevolent Doctor to wrap up a baby she was carrying, and that appeared very cold, and that the gaiters were seen afterwards outside a second-hand shop of no very good repute, where they were readily identified by every one except the Doctor himself, who was seen to stop at the door and handle them approvingly "as if admiring some curious novelty in pattern, and considering them an improvement on his own." Of course this is only a very clever fiction, just such as boys would be apt to make,

and even the manufacturers of the story might be among his most devoted admirers. How sincerely attached the boys were to him is beautifully told in the same page. When he walked up and down the quadrangle that joined to the house, stray rooks and jackdaws would regard him "with their heads cocked slyly, as if they knew how much more knowing they were in worldly affairs than he ;" and "if any sort of vagabond could only get near enough to his creaking shoes to attract his attention to one sentence of a tale of distress, that vagabond was made for the next two days." Yet nothing can show the devotion of the boys more clearly than their watchful care to protect him against such marauders. They "took pains to cut them off at angles, and to get out at windows and turn them out of the courtyard, before they could make the Doctor aware of their presence ; which was sometimes happily effected within a few yards of him without his knowing anything of the matter as he jogged to and fro." This is true to the life ; and when boys are treated as he treated them, good boys and indifferent ones too, would fly to save such a master from harm or annoyance, even if it were never to be known they had done so. Indeed, any one who took advantage of his simpleness to wrong him in any way would be scorned by nearly every schoolboy I ever knew.

Yet how many would stir to help such worthies as Creakle or Squeers? or how many would regret if an accident, say for example a broken limb, had befallen

them? Let any one suppose himself a schoolboy once more and answer the question fairly. That some gentle natures, perhaps Smike himself, might, is just possible. That all *should* do so I know—but that such abundant charity will ever prevail I much doubt, until the whole race of Squeerses and Creakles is gone. Dickens had a high motive in *Copperfield*, and two examples of this will close the notice of the book.

When David's mother died her annuity of a hundred guineas a year ceased, and Mr. Murdstone did not send him back to Creakle's, so that he was allowed to wander about the lanes and the house pretty much as he desired, until he was sent away to the bottling store of Murdstone and Grinby, to herd with common boys little better—perhaps no better—than street arabs, but he says in Chapter XI.: "I know enough of the world now to have almost lost the capacity of being much surprised by anything; but it is a matter of some surprise to me, even now, that I can have been so easily thrown away at such an age. A child of excellent abilities, and with strong powers of observation, quick, eager, delicate, and soon hurt bodily or mentally, it seems wonderful to me that nobody should have made any sign in my behalf. But none was made, and I became at ten years old a little labouring hind in the service of Murdstone and Grinby." How easily he might have slid off into the criminal class anyone may see, and there is a terrible reflection that if we could only know the true history of many a convict,

perhaps of a much larger number than we suppose, we should find circumstances to extenuate his misdeeds that would almost make us wish to see him free.

The other example is Steerforth; his temptations were in every way different, he had every advantage of person and ability, and had the singular faculty of attracting any one towards him. He was in circumstances of abundant affluence, and had, so to say, no cloud in his summer's sky. He was not altogether bad—far from it. When Copperfield went to Creakle's, and was brought, as it were, in judgment before the winning youth, he declared that the label "he bites" on his back was a "jolly shame;" and though his selfishness soon cropped out when he found that David had seven shillings in pocket money, he treated the orphan boy kindly, and even to the last was honestly fond of him, and loved his company. Across the channel that separates Norfolk from Suffolk there is a ferry which Copperfield used sometimes to take in order to reach Peggotty's boat, and the ferry is there yet, and once when he crossed and suddenly laid his hand on Steerforth's shoulder, the latter said, almost angrily, "You come upon me like a reproachful ghost." And in this, almost his last interview with Copperfield, he said, "David, I wish to God I had had a judicious father these last twenty years." The terrible ruin he meditated upon the poor fisherman's house was causing him these many pangs when Copperfield said—

▲

“My dear Steerforth, what’s the matter.”

“I wish with all my soul I had been better guided,” he exclaimed, “I wish with all my soul I could guide myself better !”

## CHAPTER II.

## PICKWICK PAPERS.

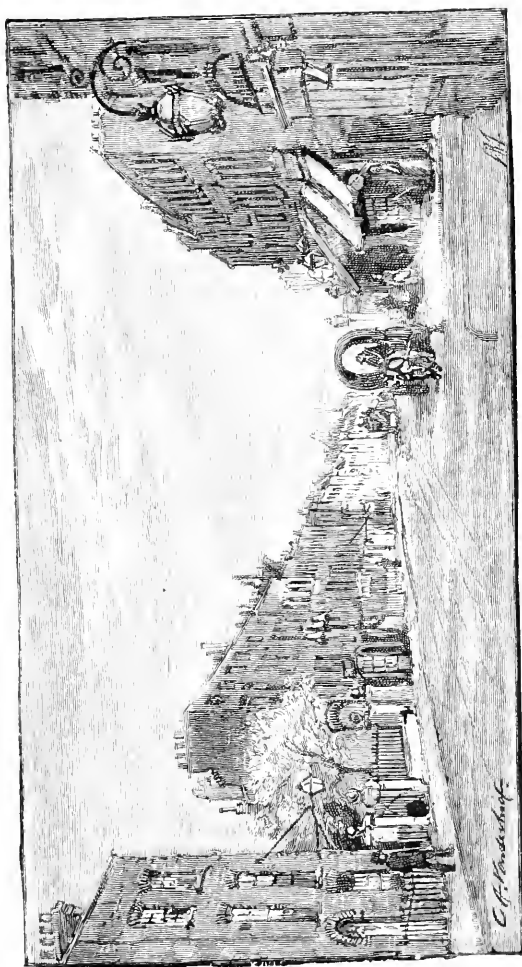
THE "argument," as old books used to term it, of Pickwick is this. There was a club called the Pickwick Club, and its members at one of their meetings received a proposal from Messrs. Pickwick, Tracy Tupman, Snodgrass, and Winkle to form a corresponding branch of the club, and to travel through England at their own expense, and forward, from time to time, parcels and letters to the central stem. But soon after they had commenced their researches adventure after adventure came upon them, and they devoted their time, apparently, to enjoying these, without, indeed, adding much to scientific knowledge. Some of the antiquarian and topographical societies do now make annual excursions to places of interest in England, and good service is done in this manner; but we want, in addition to these, an humbler and more searching investigation of the byeways and less trodden parts of our grand island.

Pickwick rose up early in the morning from his slumbers on the 13th of May, as we are told, in the

year 1827, "and threw open his chamber window and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet, Goswell Street was at his right hand—as far as the eye could reach, Goswell Street extended to his left, and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way." "Such," thought Mr. Pickwick, "are the narrow views of the philosophers who, content with examining the things that lie before them, look not to the truths that are hidden beyond. As well might I be content to gaze at Goswell Street for ever without one effort to penetrate the hidden countries which on every side surround it." These were his reflections when he packed up his portmanteau and met his confreres on their road to Rochester. Goswell Street, it has been said in some reviews of Dickens, is hardly the place which such a philosopher as Pickwick would have chosen for his lodgings. But though it is much altered now, it seems by no means ill-adapted for the residence of a quiet bachelor; indeed, it was the writer's good fortune to know a resident lodger who lived at one of the houses shown on the left hand side of the illustration, and who was one of the rare class we meet with that are always ready for a "good long country walk." His occupation did not detain him in town, any more than Mr. Pickwick's. His landlady was a more or less comely widow, and we had just finished examining an ordnance map, and looking out the best road to Uxbridge across the country, intending to return in the evening to dine at

his lodgings, when a message came from the landlady to know what he would please to order for his dinner ; and on being appealed to, I said I made a point of always ordering anything for which a locality was celebrated, such as bloaters at Yarmouth, or smoked bacon in Wiltshire, etc. etc.; and he rather shuddered when I reminded him that his neighbourhood was celebrated for "chops and tomatoe sauce." He found, he afterwards said, that the locality was extremely comfortable, and just such a one as Mr. Pickwick might have selected. It has altered since he resided there, and many of the old houses have been converted into shops, where a quiet trade is carried on in rather out of the way manufactures. The shops are generally extended into the street, to the edge of the property, reaching over what was formerly the area, and the old front of the house stands back. The North Metropolitan tramways now run through Goswell Road almost continually, and are a great convenience to the residents, as the width of the road prevents their being in the way. They go to Archway Tavern, Dalston Junction, and Lea-bridge Road. Taverns with many gin-palaces have made their appearance in the street ; and Combe, Delafield and Co., Meux, and the London Breweries Co. may be read in gilt letters on many signboards. When Pickwick went on his memorable Rochester trip, he walked down the street as far as St. Martin's-le-Grand, and called a cab, which he ordered to drive to "Golden Cross," and he heard the cabman say sulkily to his friend, the





GOSWELL ROAD.



waterman, that the fare was "only a bob's worth." It was the post office at St. Martin's - le - Grand that so astonished John Browdie when he came to London with his wife on their wedding trip. And I found in the Harleian MS. a counterpart to the Yorkshire corn factor, who with his wife had come to London for the first time. Browdie said, when he saw the cathedral, "see there, lass! there be Paul's Church. Ecod he be a soizable one he be."

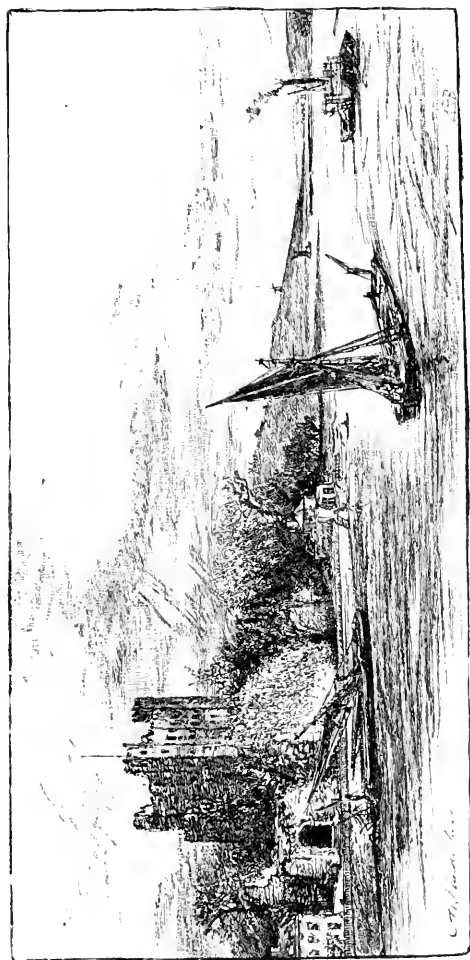
"Goodness, John! I shouldn't have thought it could be half the size—what a monster," his wife replied; and then he pointed out the post-office which Mr. Pickwick had referred to in his journey, and said that if his wife guessed at it she would come near within "twelve month." "Its na-but a post-office, they need to charge for double letters." In the Harleian MS. the rustic closely resembles John Browdie.

"When I came first to London Towne  
I was a novice, as most men are ;  
Methought ye king dwelt at ye sign of ye Crown,  
And the way to heaven was through the Starr.

"I set up my horse, and walkt to St. Paul's ;  
'Lord,' thought I, 'what a church is here !'  
And then I swore by all Christian soules  
'Twas a mile long, or very neere."

This, however, referred to the old St. Paul's, which was destroyed at the fire, but which must certainly have ranked among the finest buildings in the world.

The destination of Pickwick and his followers was the Bull Inn, which is still the principal one in Rochester. It has, since his time, taken the more euphonious title of Victoria Hotel. The character which Jingle gave of it is certainly not deserved now :—" Dear, very dear ; half a crown in the bill if you look at a waiter ; charge you more if you dine at a friend's than they would if you dined in the coffee-room—rum fellows very." The room where the celebrated ball was held is of course shown, and Mr. Winkle's remarks will at once occur before he victimised Tupman for the tickets. "Mess on the staircase, waiter—forms going up, carpenters coming down ; lamps, glasses, harps. What's going forward ?" and when the susceptible Mr. Tupman had heard that Kent was celebrated for apples, cherries, hops, and women, and the waiter said that tickets were "to be had at the bar—half a guinea each, sir," the temptation proved too strong for him to resist. The long room where the musicians were securely confined in "an elevated den" is pointed out yet. On the archway that leads into the house is the inscription, "nice house, good beds," *vide* Pickwick. The ball-room sees only few guests now, but the encounter between Dr. Slammon and Alfred Jingle will immortalise it. Though only a small part of Mr. Pickwick's observations concerning Rochester are narrated—"the principal productions of these towns appear to be soldiers, sailors, Jews, chalk, shrimps, officers, and dock-yard men,"—there is much in Rochester that would be of especial interest to a scholar



ROCHESTER CASTLE.



and antiquarian such as we might fairly suppose him to have been. There is the Temple farm, Strood, with its Norman apartment and great long narrow windows ; the George and the Crown ; these contain some early English vaulting, and in the George are some quaint old bosses and corbels that were cut when Strongbow invaded Ireland. The Crown has a basement and ground-floor that were built when John signed the Magna Charta, and the entrance gateway was erected at about the same time that Henry VIII. came to it and met Anne of Cleves ; while near the cloth house, which was built by Sir Cloudesley Shovel, is the house from which James II. escaped in 1688, and the Cathedral would be a mine of wealth to the genial antiquary.

Rochester Castle was of course in itself a charm to Mr. Pickwick, and though he may have seen it a hundred times before, it would always present itself again with the force of novelty. "Magnificent ruin !" said Mr. Augustus Snodgrass, with all the poetic fervour that distinguished him when they came in sight of the fine old castle. "What a study for an antiquarian !" were the very words which fell from Mr. Pickwick's mouth, as he applied the telescope to his eye ; and Mr. Jingle's interpolation—"Glorious pile—frowning walls—tottering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases. Old cathedral too, earthy smell——" The castle now is just as it was when Pickwick saw it. It was built more than seven hundred years ago by Archbishop Wm. de Corbeyl, and was only inferior

in size to Dover. But in grandeur and elegance it was very superior to any castle of its age. There were great state apartments, of which there are yet remains, and the walls of Kentish rag and Caen stone are twelve feet in thickness.

Dickens, it is said, used to be intensely interested in all that related to the history of the castle, and often told visitors of its latest days when one Walker Welldone, who was the heir of Sir Anthony Welldone, "sold the timbers to one Gimmit, and the stone stairs and other squared and wrought stone of the windows and arches to different masons in London ; he would likewise have sold the whole materials of the castle to a paviour, but on an essay being made in the east side, near the postern leading to Bully Hill, the effects of which are seen in a large chasm, the mortar was found so hard, that the expense of separating the stones amounted to more than their value, by which the noble pile escaped a total demolition." Dickens very naturally remarked upon the inaptness of the name of the man who has become famous through his connection with Rochester Castle. The castle contains a deep well which is two feet nine inches in diameter, and Welby Pugin, the architect, when he was exploring the castle nearly lost his life in it.

The fifth chapter of *Pickwick* introduces us to Rochester bridge. "Bright and pleasant was the sky, balmy the air, and beautiful the appearance of every object around, as Mr. Pickwick leant over the balustrades of Rochester bridge, contemplating nature, and waiting for break-



fast. The scene was indeed one which might well have charmed a far less reflective mind, than that to which it was presented. On the left of the spectator lay the ruined wall, broken in many places, and in some, overhanging the narrow beach below in rude and heavy masses. Huge knots of seaweed hung upon the jagged and pointed stones, trembling in every breath of wind; and the green ivy clung mournfully round the dark and ruined battlements. Behind it rose the ancient castle, its towers roofless, and its massive walls crumbling away, but telling us proudly of its old might and strength, as when, seven hundred years ago, it rang with the clash of arms, or resounded with the noise of feasting and revelry. On either side the banks of the Medway, covered with corn-fields and pastures, with here and there a distant church or a wind-mill stretched away as far as the eye could see, presenting a rich and varied landscape, rendered more beautiful by the changing shadows which passed swiftly across it."

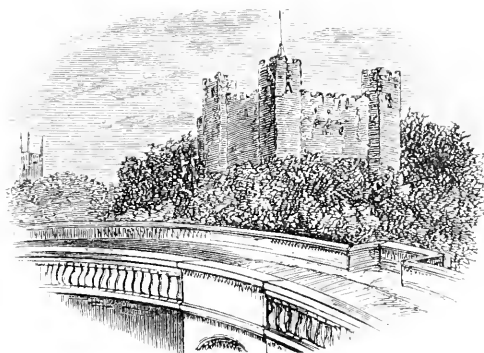
Kit's Coty house was a favourite resort of Dickens, and it might naturally be supposed to have great attractions for Mr. Pickwick. Wonderful and exhausting debates have been raised upon the origin of its name. Even in Elizabeth's reign a painstaking antiquary said that this relic was the "tomb of Categern." "Categern, honoured with a stately solemn funeral, is thought to have been interred near unto Aylesford, where, under the side of a hill, I saw four huge rude hard stones, erected, two for the sides, one transversal in the midst between

them, and the hugest of all piled and laid over them in manner of the British monument which is called Stonehenge, but not so artificially with mortice and tenants." Grose, Lambard, and Holland, and many other antiquarians, have sorely puzzled themselves about the origin of the name Kit's Coty house. Kit, according to Grose, is an abbreviation of Categern the British general, and coty is coity, coit being the name for a large flat stone. It would be useless to extend the remarks upon various theories that have been propounded about the origin of the name, but it is clear that they suggested the idea of the celebrated stone that Pickwick found. "In a county known to abound in remains of the early ages, in a village in which there still existed some memorials of the olden time—he—he—the chairman of the Pickwick Club, had discovered a strange and curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity, which had wholly escaped the observation of the many learned men who had preceded him," and this quite determined his return to town the following day, in order that the "treasure" might be deposited where it would be appreciated and properly understood; and though Mr. Blotton made a journey to Cobham and found Mr. Stumps, who believed the stone to be old, but positively declared that he was the author of the inscription, his statement only procured his ejection from the club.

The bridge at Rochester, which so often appears in the pages of Dickens, is not the one which now spans the



BULL HOTEL, ROCHESTER.



ROCHESTER OLD BRIDGE.



Medway, but a noble old structure that boasted of ten fine arches, and was built in the reign of Edward III. Sir R. Knowles was the builder, and it is estimated that the sum it cost would be equal to about £70,000 sterling. When the old bridge was demolished the contractors made Dickens a present of one of the balusters as a memorial. He set it upon his back lawn, and placed a sundial upon it. A favourite walk of our author's was from Gadshill to Rochester, and on a market-day, when the country carts came lumbering along the road, and the rustics with smocks and old-fashioned costumes formed picturesque groups in the city streets, he was in his glory. He was especially fond, on a hot summer day, of going into the cool shades of the cathedral, and its legends never tired him; he would describe to his visitors how it had been twice converted into huge stabling, once by Simon de Montfort, and once by the army of Cromwell, who made a great saw-pit in the nave. The tomb of St. William had great charms for Dickens. In the year 1201, William of Perth, a wealthy baker, paid a visit to Rochester on his way to Jerusalem. His liberality was well known, as he made it a point to bestow every tenth loaf he baked upon the poor. He was a guest at the priory, and delighted the Benedictines with his pleasant manners and his generosity. When he left Rochester to continue his pilgrimage to the east, his servant was tempted by the large amount of money he carried with him, and murdered him outside the city walls. His fate excited the deep

sympathy of the good monks of Rochester, and he was buried in the cathedral. Miracles were soon performed at his shrine, and about fifty years after his death he was canonised. His tomb is on the north aisle of the choir, and so many pilgrims used to visit his shrine that in the thirteenth century the offerings they brought enabled the monks to build a great part of the present cathedral.

Not only in *Pickwick* does Dickens introduce memorials of Rochester, but under the name of *Cloisterham* he introduces us again to the city. "An ancient city *Cloisterham*, and no meet dwelling-place for any one with hankering after the noisy world. A monotonous, silent city, deriving throughout an earthy flavour from its cathedral crypt. A drowsy city *Cloisterham*, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconstancy more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come. A queer moral to derive from antiquity, yet older than any traceable antiquity.

So silent are the streets of *Cloisterham* (though prone to echo on the smallest provocation) that of a summer's day the sun-blinds of the shops scarce dare to flap in the south wind, while the sun-browned tramps who pass along and stare quicken their limp a little that they may the sooner get beyond the confines of its oppressive respectability. This is a feat not difficult of achievement, seeing that the streets of *Cloisterham* city are little more than one narrow street, by which you get into and get out of it, the rest being mostly disappointing yards with pumps

in them, and no thoroughfare—exception made of the Cathedral Close, and a paved Quaker settlement, in colour and general conformation very like a Quaker bonnet, up in a shady corner. In a word, the city of another and a by-gone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about its cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath.

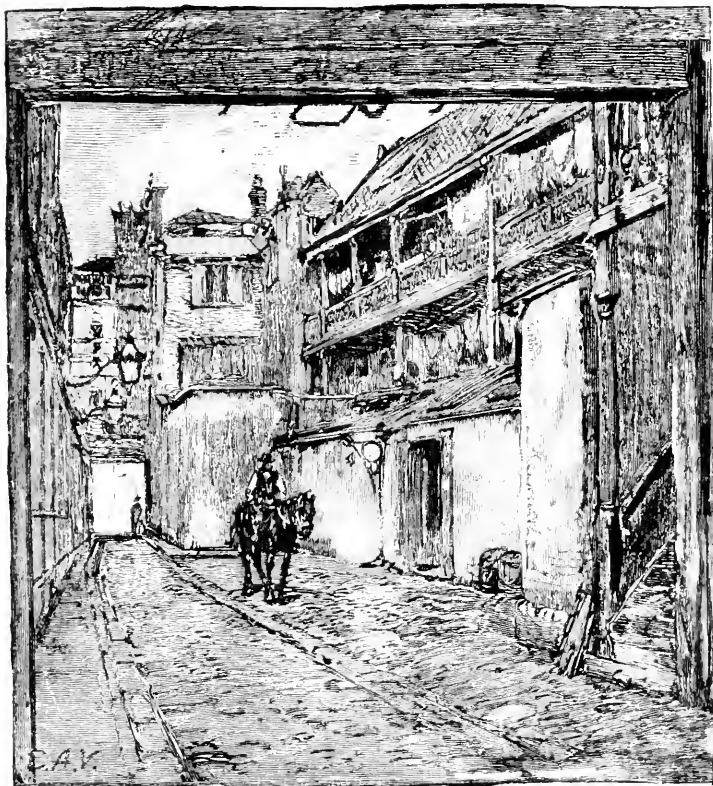
Dingley Dell and Muggleton are generally considered to be mythical places, though the hospitable residence of Mr. Wardle may be seen in every county in England. In Kent he would be called a yeoman, for the yeoman of that county are proverbial for their affluence; in other counties he would be called a squire. There are three towns within the radius from Rochester that Dickens gives as the locality of Muggleton, namely Faversham, Tunbridge, and Seven-Oaks, but these have no feature in common with the enterprising borough that had “presented at divers times no fewer than one thousand four hundred petitions against the continuance of negro-slavery abroad, and an equal number against any interference with the factory system at home; sixty-eight for permitting the sale of benefices in the church, and eighty-six for abolishing Sunday trading in the streets.” There is a corporate town that is once mentioned by Dickens in another of his works that lies in the York Road which does answer the description of Muggleton, but it is a hundred and fifty miles away, so we must be content to suppose that the latter is imaginary, or has been transported from Notting-

hamshire. "Mr. Pickwick stood in a principal street of this illustrious town and gazed with an air of curiosity not unmixed with interest on the objects around him. There was an open square for the market-place, and in the centre of it a large inn with a sign-post in front displaying an object very common in art, but rarely met with in nature—to wit, a blue lion with three bow legs in the air, balancing himself on the extreme centre claw of the fourth foot. There were within sight an auctioneer's and fire agency office, a corn factor's, a linen-draper's, a saddler's, a distiller's, a grocer's, and a shoe shop—the last mentioned warehouse being also appropriated to the diffusion of hats, bonnets, wearing apparel, cotton umbrellas, and useful knowledge. There was a red-brick house, with a small paved courtyard in front, which anybody might have known belonged to the attorney. There was, moreover, another red-brick house with Venetian blinds and a large brass door-plate, with a very legible announcement that it belonged to the surgeon."

The slight description of Dingley Dell is very charming. Mr. Pickwick had risen soon after the sun, and thrown open the latticed casement. "The rich sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower garden beneath scented the air around; the deep green meadow shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the gentle air; and the birds sang as if every sparkling drop were to them a fountain of inspiration."



But the pleasant days at Dingley Dell were destined to be rudely cut short, by the outrageous conduct of Mr.



WHITE HART INN.

Jingle, who eloped with Mr. Wardle's sister. He was pursued by Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Wardle, and finally

hunted down at the White Hart, which yet stands, and is situated in High Street, Borough. Two storeys of the gallery are not shown in the illustration, for they are overhead, and the beam on the foreground supports the ballustraded fronts of the landings as we see in the right hand side of the picture. The courtyard of the Saracen's Head, opposite page 38 in *Nicholas Nickleby* (original edition), gives a very good idea of one of these quadrangles in full working order, with the coach loading up, preparatory to its journey. The White Hart singularly resembles some of the inns in old German towns, such as we may always see in the towns along the Rhine, or Moselle, or at Strasburg, and the likeness is increased by the red Dutch tiles that cover the roof—they are hollow in form, overlapping each other, and are always eminently picturesque. The left hand side of the picture shows a restaurant that has been added in recent times, and projects into the court, for formerly the curb-stone was in the middle of the enclosure and the galleries travelled round the three sides. The square entrance opens into High Street and through it the Rochester and Canterbury coaches used to roll in Pickwick's time. It was in this yard that Sam Weller was first encountered by Wardle and Pickwick as he was "engaged in burnishing a pair of painted tops, the personal property of a farmer, who was refreshing himself with a slight lunch of two or three pounds of cold beef, and a pot or two of porter after the fatigues of the Borough market."

The reflections of the "boots" at the White Hart are quite worthy of his fame, when Mr. Perker advanced and blandly addressed him as "My friend." "You're one of the advice gratis order or you would not be so werry fond of me all at once." But he only said—"Well, sir," and then the subtle inquiries of Mr. Perker, who was acting in strict conformity with legal precedent, were cut short by the rough and ready method of Messrs. Wardle and Pickwick, who offered Weller a half guinea if he would only answer a few questions regarding the inmates. In vain Mr. Perker protested in polite language against such an unprecedented intrusion, and anxiously addressing each of them as "Now, my dear sir—now, my dear sir," begged them to place implicit trust in him, and assured them that he would willingly receive any suggestions, but they must be to him as coming from an "*amicus curiæ*," and he was beginning to show from Barnwell that his view was unassailable, when Weller, as it were, entered an appearance upon the scene, and confirmed the justice of the calculations of Mr. Pickwick regarding the power of the half-guinea, and gave a professional *resumé* of the sojourners at the inn. "There's a wooden leg in number six ; there's a pair of Hessians in thirteen ; there's two pair of halves in the commercial ; there's these here painted tops in the snuggerly inside the bar ; and five more tops in the coffee-room,"—"Nothing more?" inquired Perker, when Sam recollected that there was "a pair of Vellingtons a good deal worn, and a pair of lady's shoes, in number

five," which shoes were identified by him as having been made in Muggleton. The apartment where this colloquy occurred was in the room in the right hand of the yard that leads through the square-headed door. There is a somewhat curious iron crane which is shown here, and which was designed to lift heavy weights or carcasses of oxen from trucks to remove them to the cellarage of the inn. The old traveller's room is entered through this door, and there is a fireplace several centuries old, and a groined apartment that certainly dates back to the time when Canterbury pilgrims used to rest here: a great part of the lower rooms are occupied by a "bacon drier," whose carts are often seen in the streets of London.

Perhaps a still more picturesque view of this hostelry might be had from the modern restaurant, where two double rows of galleries are seen, and from this point of view we have a more adequate idea of its former importance. At one time travellers of the highest distinction stayed here, before railways landed any one at their destination at almost any time that was required. In its galleries Waterloo and Trafalgar have been talked over when the news of the victories were fresh. Walpole and Pitt were living powers, and even the tidings of Oudenarde or Blenheim had not reached the tavern precincts until it had acquired a venerable age. Now cottagers of humble means live in its apartments, and along the galleries clothes are hung out to dry, and shoeless children play at games. But in an afternoon's sun

the appearance of the quadrangle is very striking and picturesque. There are quaint deep effects of light and shade, and some few scarlet-runners and creepers climb up the supports and seem to flourish. Even in Pickwick's time the White Hart was on the declining side of life. "The yard presented some of that bustle and activity which are the usual characteristics of a large coach inn. Three or four lumbering waggons, each with a pile of goods beneath its ample canopy about the height of the second-floor window of an ordinary house, were stowed beneath a lofty roof which extended over one end of the yard, and another, which was probably to commence its journey that morning, was drawn out into the open space. A double tier of bedroom galleries with old clumsy balustrades ran round the two sides of the straggling area, and a double row of bells to correspond, sheltered from the weather by a sloping roof hung over the door leading to the bar and coffee-room. Two or three gigs and chaise-carts were wheeled up under different little sheds and pent-houses; and the occasional heavy tread of a cart horse, or rattling of a chain at the farther end of the yard, announced to anybody who cared about the matter that the stable was in that direction. When we add that a few boys in smock frocks were lying asleep on heavy packages, wool-packs, and other articles that were scattered about on heaps of straw, we have described as fully as need be the general appearance of the White Hart Inn, High Street, Borough, on that particular morning in question."

The restaurant that runs along one side of the first quadrangle (for it must be remembered that there are two) though it is *in* the White Hart, is not of *it*, and it is the only trace of the hospitality which once made the inn famous. But even in this flicker of its former life it is pleasing to be able to add that its traditions are not quite forgotten. The steaks and chops are of the very best, and when I was there at the latter part of August a variety to these was offered in the shape of a dinner of half a grouse with bread sauce, for eighteenpence, including the vegetables that were in season.

Beyond the quadrangle that has been described there is another which has lost still further any traces of its former greatness. Whatever is left of the stables and buildings which surrounded it in its palmy days is now a ruin, and no use at all is made of the roomy space. There is a lamp in the middle that doubtless has been lighted at some time, but now it presents a most dissolute tumble-down appearance, and round it are high dust-heaps. Several flocks of fowls frequent the yard, and seem to find some mysterious subsistence in its close, but if they could be identified by any owner involves a question that might admit of doubt. They would appear to have reversed the general order of nature in adopting a London life, and, so far from showing the bright plumage of a farmyard with all its varieties of colour, to have reverted back to some original type, and all have become self-coloured under the garb of a smoky gray. It was im-

possible to avoid a desire to take them to a village green, and, from motives of curiosity only, to see how they would have comported themselves under their changed condition. In this second yard there was a most wonderful collection of waggons of many ages and periods—some had certainly long been out of use when Mr. Pickwick interviewed Weller. The square was a perfect Greenwich hospital for them, and there were some so much out of any known fashion that I could hardly imagine what use they were ever intended for.

While I was wondering at the collection of vehicles, a dapper man, who belonged apparently to some part of the decaying establishment, and who must have been a descendant of Sam Weller's, asked me, respectfully enough, if I wanted to buy any of the articles, and on learning that I had at any rate no present intentions of making such a venture, he told me confidentially that there was "money in them." "Then," I said, "it must be under the floor, or what is left of one, for some have certainly not earned much, I should think, since Cromwell's time." This speech seemed to make him friendly, and he suggested that if any city firm had an article to advertise they might announce that there would be a procession of the White Horse yard waggons at some certain date, and these would contain the article, whether it were medicine or washing soap, for the convenience of customers. On my remarking that the waggons would hardly hold together till they had reached Waterloo

Bridge, he quickly said, "Well, then, repair them, and do the provinces after on the strength of the new bolts."

Some idea may be gathered of the altered times since *Pickwick* was written, and the present. Railway trains did not originally run on Sundays, and I remember that some adverse remarks were made when the wife of a cabinet minister was summoned to her father's deathbed, but she could not find a Sunday train. She said that no post-horses could by any offer be procured, because the inn-keepers told her they were not "on the road now." But in *Pickwick's* time any one seems to have been able to go into a coaching house and ask for a carriage and pair with the most perfect confidence that their order could be complied with. "Chaise and four directly! out with them, put up the gig afterwards; now boys!" cries the landlord, "chaise and four out, look alive there;" and then the bustle that might be expected to occur followed in the inn-yard, as the lantern glimmered and the horses' hoofs clattered on the pavement of the yard, and the chaise rumbled as it was drawn out of the coach-house. Then they seem to have had no difficulty in procuring another chaise with post-boys at some inn on the road. At the present time there are few of the largest hotels in the kingdom that would not be taken a little aback at such an order.

The "White Hart" comprises more than one freehold, and the properties are singularly interwoven, but its days are numbered, and at the expiration of a lease the whole



of the property is to be pulled down. But there are other old hostelries besides this one not far off. In the same chapter that introduces us to the White Hart it is said that "There are in London several old inns, once the headquarters of celebrated coaches in the days when coaches performed their journeys in a graver and more solemn manner than they do in these times, but which have now degenerated into little more than the booking-places of country waggons. The reader would look in vain for any of these ancient hostelries among the Golden Crosses, and Bull and Mouth, which rear their stately fronts in the improved streets of London. If he would light upon any of these old places he must direct his steps to the obscurer quarters of the town, and there, in some secluded nooks, he will find several still standing, with a kind of gloomy sturdiness, amidst the modern innovations which surround them. In the Borough especially there still remain some half-dozen old inns which have preserved their external features unchanged, and which have escaped alike the rage for public improvement, and the encroachments of private speculation. Great rambling, queer old places they are, with galleries, and passages, and staircases, wide enough and antiquated enough to furnish materials for a hundred ghost stories, supposing we should ever be reduced to the lamentable necessity of inventing any, and that the world should exist long enough to exhaust the innumerable veracious legends connected with Old London Bridge and its adjacent neighbourhood on the Surrey side."

Directly below the White Hart is the George Inn, also an old coaching house, built round a quadrangle. Unlike its neighbour it is a very good house, and all its appliances are in thorough working order, indeed, for any one who wished to study the economy of an ancient English inn, it would offer an excellent opportunity. The present hostelry is at least three hundred years old, though many of the parts which meet the eye date from a more recent period than the walls. The quadrangle which it contains is scrupulously clean and always white-washed; creepers run up the shafts that support the galleries, and on a summer day it is difficult to believe that you are not in a pleasant roomy country inn in Kent or Hampshire. In the courtyard is the booking-office for parcels of the Great Northern Railway; and when a covered van lumbers through the archway, and the ancient hostelry can just be seen in glimpses from High Street, the view is intensely picturesque.

Next to the George Inn is the Queen's Head, which I was assured by the landlord dated back as far as 1432 for a tavern, and I have no difficulty in supposing that his information was perfectly correct. This inn is not so much used by travellers as the George, it is more of a tavern, but it has many objects of interest, such as an old smoke-jack, and a fireplace that dates back either to Elizabeth or James I. There are, as Dickens says, some three more such inns in the Borough, and perhaps, indeed, there are traces of more than this, but the three described,

which are perhaps only partially known even to Londoners, are abundantly worth a visit.

The fine old church of St. Saviour, or St. Mary Overy, stands hard by on the opposite side of the street, the name of which for some cause has been altered from High Street to Wellington Street, and it was a source of perpetual delight to Dickens ; he especially used to pore over the epitaphs, some of which are very amusing and quaint, and their name is legion. I remember the last lines of one upon a grocer—

“Weep not for him since he is gone before  
To Heaven, where grocers there are many more.”

The railway buildings and the high level road dwarf the ancient fabric, but it is one of the architectural gems of England.

Eatonswill is, of course, entirely a fictitious place, quite as much so as Muggleton. It was situated on the Norwich road, and Pickwick, accompanied by his three faithful followers, and this time by Sam Weller, booked places on the Norwich coach, and went there to pursue their investigations and researches. At Eatonswill they met Mr. Leo Hunter. “We have all heard of your fame, sir,” said Mr. Leo Hunter, as he made a very polite call upon Mr. Pickwick, to ask him to pay a visit to his residence, which was perhaps not inaptly called “The Den.” While seated round the festive board at Mr. Hunter’s it was that Mr. Charles Fitzmarshall was announced as a

guest, and Mr. Pickwick and his friends were amazed beyond measure to find on his appearance at the hospitable entertainment, that Mr. Charles Fitzmarshall was Mr. Alfred Jingle disguised in a bran-new suit of naval uniform. Mr. Leo Hunter told the astonished Pickwick that he was a gentleman of fortune, and was then staying at Bury St. Edmunds, at the Angel. No persuasion would induce Mr. Pickwick to remain any longer, so he at once made a speedy exit towards Bury accompanied by the faithful Sam Weller, who, however, was destined this time to find his match in Job Trotter, the accomplice and *ci-devant* footman of Alfred Jingle.

The delight that Dickens has in country scenes breaks out here again, as Pickwick and Weller, "perched on the outside of a stage-coach, were every succeeding minute placing a less and less distance between themselves and the good old town of Bury St. Edmunds." We might possibly consider that Eatonswill was Sudbury, though this is more from its locality than any other connecting circumstance. The country through which they drove is delightful. On the south and south-west the enclosed country is a picture of fertility, and there are many noble trees along the lanes. Bury is charmingly situated on the river Lark, and it commands such extensive views that it has often been called the Montpellier of England. The halls, where yarns were deposited, yet stand, but they are empty, and only the name of Bury as a great centre of industry remains. Still it is a very delightful old town, and the

abbey gateway might well have entranced even a less enthusiastic antiquary than Mr. Pickwick.

“There is no month in the whole year,” Dickens proceeds, “in which nature wears a more beautiful appearance than in the month of August. Spring has many beauties, and May is a fresh and blooming month, but the charms of this time of the year are enhanced by their contrast with the winter season. August has no such advantage. It comes when we remember nothing but clear skies, green fields, and sweet-smelling flowers—when the recollection of snow, and ice, and bleak winds, has faded from our mind as completely as if they had disappeared from the earth, and yet what a pleasant time it is ; orchards and corn-fields ring with the hum of labour, trees bend beneath the thick clusters of rich fruit which bow their branches to the ground, and the corn piled in graceful sheaves, or waving in every slight breath as it sweeps above it as if moved by the sickle, tinges the landscape with a golden hue. A mellow softness appears to hang over the whole earth ; the influence of the season seems to extend itself to the very waggon whose slow motion across the well-reaped field is perceptible only to the eye, but strikes with no harsh sound upon the ear.” And then is described the sleepy interest which the coach excites as it rolls along the Suffolk high-road. The reaper stops his work and stands with folded arms looking at the vehicle as it whirls past ; and the rough cart-horses bestow a sleepy glance upon the smart coach team, which

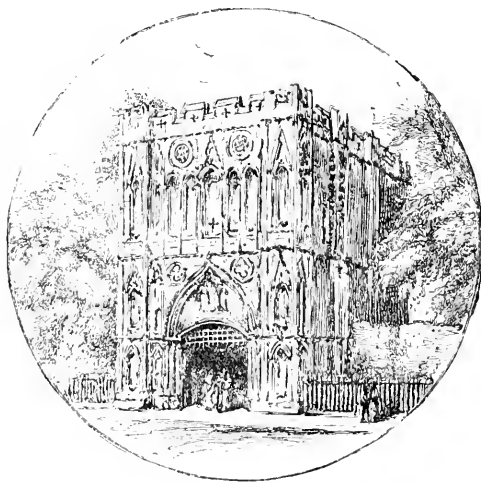
says as plainly as a horse's glance can, "It's all very fine to look at, but slow going over a heavy field is better than warm work like that, upon a dusty road after all." At last they arrived at the Angel in Bury.

This Angel is a most excellent inn on a somewhat extensive scale, and formerly it was a long-wished goal with mail-coach travellers, who were sure of a hospitable reception from the landlord. A private room was soon engaged for Mr. Pickwick, and dinner ordered by Weller. Mr. Fitzmarshall was among the guests, as the faithful

Sam soon discovered, and in half-an-hour Mr. Pickwick was seated to an excellent dinner.

It was at Bury that Sam Weller found for once his match in Job Trotter when he directed the way to Westgate house. "You turn a little to the right when you

get to the end of the town ; it stands by itself, some little distance off the high road, with the name on a brass plate



ABBEY GATE, BURY.

on the gate." And here was the somewhat absurd scene at the boarding-school, where Sam's informant, Job Trotter, had persuaded him to induce Mr. Pickwick to go to stop the elopement of Captain Fitzmarshall with the great heiress. Bury St. Edmunds was always a favourite place with Dickens. He speaks of it as a "handsome little town of thriving and cleanly appearance," over the "well-paved streets of which the coach rattled and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey." Suffolk was the county of all England which, next to Kent, Dickens delighted in. His reminiscences of Blunderstone, Yarmouth, which lies partly in the county and Ipswich, are always charming in his descriptions, and these show how well he liked them.

The abbey of Bury St. Edmunds was only second in importance to Glastonbury, and the remains that yet are left show on what a grand scale it was built. Here were fields of research for all the members of the Pickwick Club, and it is here, in all probability, that their steps were at first to be directed from Eatonswill. Through the gateway we pass along an avenue of limes beyond the churchyard, where we come across the churches of St. James and St. Mary, and the shire hall, erected on the site of St. Margaret's. Lydgate lived at Bury, and his abode is yet pointed out in the abbey precincts. He was one among the many instances of the haven which monasteries afforded to men of culture and research, and which enabled them to pursue their studies. He was versed far beyond

his day in the walks of science and art, and the powerful abbot even allowed him to open a school in the liberties of the monastery for the instruction of the sons of noblemen. Mr. Pickwick would also, as an enthusiastic reader at the British Museum, where, after retiring from business, he almost daily directed his steps through Clerkenwell Green and Hatton Wall, be familiar with the name of Lydgate. The magnificent MS. which contains the life of St. Edmund was his gift to Henry VI., and that studious and refined but ill-starred monarch conferred a life pension upon him of a sum which would now equal about £150 of our money. But Bury would possess the greatest interest to Mr. Pickwick from its connection with the baronial struggle for the great charter. In October 1214 John arrived in England full of rage and mortification at his defeats and humiliation at Tournay, and with characteristic wickedness he resolved to repay himself for his losses by increased and cruel exactions from his subjects. Fitz-Peter, the justiciary, had died during his absence, and John, who always held him in dread, said that "Now he was King of England," and he added characteristically that "In hell he may shake hands with our late Primate, for he is sure to find him there." But the barons were quite prepared for him, and they said the time was most opportune, for the feast of St. Edmund was approaching, and they would make a pilgrimage to his shrine at Bury, and, according to their seniority, they advanced to the high altar, and one after another laid his hand upon it



and swore that unless the king granted their requests, they would at once withdraw their fealty and wage war upon him. Of course the sequel is too well known to require reference, and Runnymede was the result of the meeting of the barons at Bury.

The Abbot's Bridge here is extremely beautiful, and is one of the most charming sights we can see in an old country town. It is approached by a steep narrow lane, which is pleasantly shaded with trees, and has rows of gabled cottages all along one side. There are as many picturesque views in it as would suffice to fill half a room of the Water Colour Society, and at the foot of the street the Abbot's Bridge stretches across a clear stream of such modest dimensions that one is almost surprised to find that it can support a rope ferry, which it does, a little way below the ancient bridge. Many parliaments were held in the abbey that Dickens was so fond of exploring, and no one better than he knew that at one of these, held in the first part of the fifteenth century, the undoing of "Good Duke Humphrey" was decided on by Margaret, the Queen of Henry VI., and her favourite, Suffolk, though it is needless to say that the scholar-like King had no part in the plot, but chided the crafty, cruel court that surrounded him—

"But shall I speak my conscience?"

Our kinsman Gloster is as innocent  
From meaning treason to our royal person  
As is the sucking lamb or harmless dove:  
The duke is virtuous, mild, and too well given  
To dream on evil or to work my downfall."

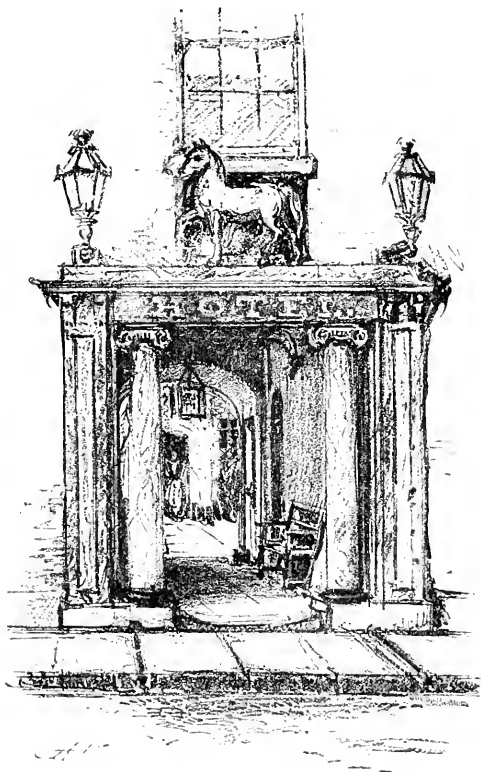
Business, however, connected with the Bardell suit brought Mr. Pickwick to town, and after he had given vent to his virtuous indignation he asked his faithful servant where he could procure a glass of brandy and water to soothe his ruffled nerves, and received for answer in a moment : "Second court on the right hand side, last house but vun on the same side the vay ; take the box as stands in the first fireplace, 'cos there aint no leg in the middle o' the table, vich all the others has, and its wery inconvenient." "The room was of very homely description, and was apparently under the especial patronage of stage-coachmen, for several gentlemen who had the appearance of belonging to that learned profession were drinking and smoking in the different boxes." Here Sam Weller encountered his father after two years' absence from that portly parent, and informed him how he had been duped by Job Trotter, much to the astonishment and sorrow of his sire. "I'm werry sorry, Sammy, to hear from your own lips as you let yourself be gammoned by that ere mulberry man. I always thought that the names of Veller and gammon never came into contract." Mr. Weller, senior, however, was able to recognise both Job Trotter and Alfred Jingle from the description that was given of them, and had himself happened to overhear them on the top of the Ipswich coach laughing and saying how they had done "Old Fireworks." Mr. Weller said that he actually heard this on the top of the coach. "I work an Ipswich coach now and again for a friend of mine. I

worked down the very day after the night as you caught the rheumatiz, and at the Black Boy at Chelmsford, the very place they'd come to, I took 'em right through to Ipswich, where the man servant, him in the mulberries, told me they was agoing to put up for a long time."

Chelmsford is directly on the London and Ipswich road, and is situated in a beautiful valley between the Chelmer and the Cann. The High Street is exceedingly well built, and the Black Boy is still the principal inn in the town. This town is less than half the size of Colchester, which lies directly on the Ipswich road, and is rather more than half way to that old-fashioned town.

Ipswich is well worthy of a visit, if only for the sake of its antiquities, though the county all round it is extremely beautiful. "In the main street of Ipswich, on the left hand side of the way, a short distance after you have passed through the open space fronting the Town Hall, stands an inn known far and wide as 'the Great White Horse,' rendered the more conspicuous by a stone statue of some rampacious animal with flowing mane and tail, distantly resembling an insane cart-horse which is elevated above the principal door. The Great White Horse is famous in the neighbourhood in the same degree as a prize ox or county paper, chronicled turnip or unwieldy pig, for its enormous size. Never were such labyrinths of uncarpeted passages, such clusters of mouldy, badly-lighted rooms, such large numbers of small dens

for eating and sleeping in, beneath any one roof, as are collected between the four walls of the Great White Horse



"GREAT WHITE HORSE" INN, IPSWICH

at Ipswich." In Key Street there are a number of old Dutch-looking houses, and the "Ram" Inn is a very old

hostelry. It is said to have been the birthplace of Henry Tooley, who left by will, dated 1550, the sum of money which built and endowed the extensive almshouses in Foundation Street, and in the steeple of the church we see there is a large key, showing that the church is dedicated to St. Peter. The old house, called Sparrowes House, is one of the most interesting town-houses in England. Now it is occupied as a very excellent bookstore, but it has been preserved in its entirety, and it is not so very long since that it was the residence of the last of the Sparrowe family—a family that had occupied it for many generations. Tavern Street leads from the front of the Town-Hall, and in this the celebrated White Horse is situated. It takes its name from this hostelry, which was formerly called the “White Horse Tavern.” The front of the “Hotel” has been altered, but in the quadrangle within we may still see traces of its antiquity. “It was at the door of this overgrown tavern that the London coach stopped at the same hour every evening; and it was from this same London coach that Mr. Pickwick, Sam Weller, and Mr. Peter Magnus dismounted on the particular evening to which this chapter of our history bears reference.”

It would almost seem as if Dickens had some recollections of the “White Horse” that were not pleasant ones. Thus we read that a corpulent man, with a “fortnight’s napkin” under his arm, and “coeval stockings,” inspected Mr. Pickwick, and finally condescended to call the porter

to take his luggage ; and then we read that after the lapse of an hour "a bit of fish and a steak were served to the travellers," and when the dinner was cleared away Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Magnus drew their chairs to the fire, and having ordered a bottle of the worst possible port wine at the highest possible price, for the good of the house, drank brandy and water for their own." This must refer to some previous condition of the "Hotel," as it is called now, a name which has superseded the older ones of Tavern and Inn. The traveller now, as far as my slight experience is of value, may expect a more hospitable reception. Mr. Pickwick's awkward mistake of the bed-room, and his subsequent discovery of his own, assisted by Sam Weller, are among the best known events in Dickens.

On the morning when Mr. Weller left for London, and rallied Sam so much upon his being taken in by Job Trotter that the former for once *meekly* acknowledged his error, and said he "ought to ha' knowed better ;" but added, "it's no use talking about it now ; it's over, and can't be helped, and that's one consolation, as they always says in Turkey ven they cuts the wrong man's head off. It's my innings now, governor, and as soon as I catches hold of this here Trotter I'll have a good un ;" and the senior having consulted a large double-cased silver watch, and saying it was time to go to the office to get the "vaybill, and see the coach loaded," took a really affectionate farewell of his son, to whom he was quite as much attached as Sam was to him. "Here's your health, Sammy,"

he said, "and may you speedily wipe off the disgrace as you've inflicted upon the family name." How long the return match was coming the same chapter tells.

Among the many charms of Ipswich are its ancient churches. There are not less than twelve of these, and through many alterations some trace of ancient beauty has been preserved in each. St. Clement's Church is among the most interesting, and would seem to have been built about the time of the dissolution of monasteries, though some parts are of earlier date. There is much in its noble appearance that would attract even Sam Weller, though indeed archæological studies were more in his master's



THE GREEN GATE, ST. CLEMENT'S, IPSWICH.

way than his. The clerestory is twelve windows in length. The emblem of the anchor appears continually in its old work, for St. Clement was the father of sea-faring men, and there are brasses and monuments of great interest. Possibly Sam's comprehensive knowledge might also have told him that the remains of Thomas Eldred, who

sailed round the world with Cavendish, had found a resting-place here when his voyages were over.

This church stands just outside the old town wall, and its graveyard is both extensive and picturesque. In St. Clement's fore street are many traces of the domestic architecture which were characteristic of the later Tudor and the earlier Stuart period, and gables and bow windows, and carved beams are yet to be found in its quaint limits. The parting words of Mr. Weller to his son affected him when he said how much depended on him. "The family name depends wery much upon you, Samuel, and I hope you'll do what's right by it. Upon all little pints o' breeding I know I may trust you as well as if it was my own self."

It was in the contemplative mood that his father's last words had awakened that the younger Mr. Weller "bent his steps towards Saint Clement's Church, and endeavoured to dissipate his melancholy by strolling among its ancient precincts. He had loitered about for some time when he found himself in a retired spot—a kind of courtyard of venerable appearance—which he discovered had no other outlet than the turning by which he had entered. He was about retracing his steps when he was suddenly transfixed to the spot by a sudden appearance, and the mode and manner of this appearance we now proceed to relate." And then the celebrated return match came with a vengeance, and though, by having Pickwick and Tupman summoned for a projected duel, Trotter and Jingle managed to raise a side issue, they were cleverly tracked and

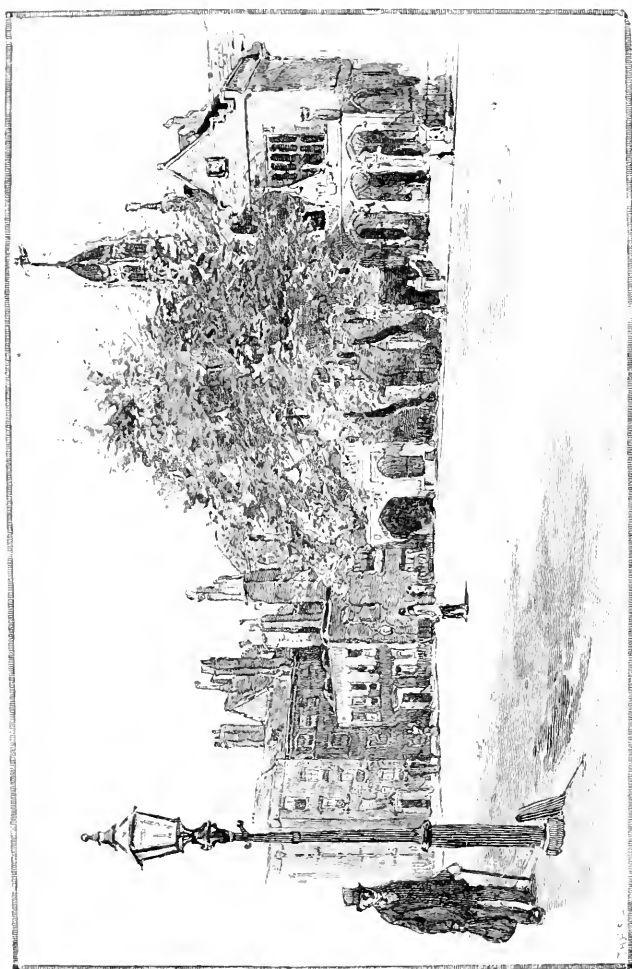


captured by Sam Weller. The next part of *Pickwick* introduces us to the devious and uncertain bye-ways of the law. The brief respite was nearly over that intervened between *Pickwick's* summons from Mrs. Bardell and the time when his cause was to be heard in open court. At last he came to London, and there, "scattered about in various holes and crevices of the Temple, are certain dark and dirty chambers, in and out of which all the morning in vacation, and half the evening too, in term time, there may be seen constantly hurrying with bundles of papers under their arms and protruding from their pockets an almost uninterrupted succession of lawyers' clerks. There are several grades of lawyers' clerks—there is the articulated clerk, who is a lawyer in perspective, who runs a tailor's bill, receives invitations to parties, knows a family in Gower Street, another in Tavistock Square, goes out of town every long vacation to see his father, and is, in short, the very aristocrat of clerks." But it was not one of these that Mr. *Pickwick* had to meet when he encountered Mr. Jackson of the house of Dodson and Fogg, Freeman's Court Cornhill. Then "there is the salaried clerk—out of door or in door, as the case may be—who devotes the major part of his thirty shillings a-week to his personal pleasure and adornment, repairs half price to the Adelphi at least three times a week, dissipates majestically at the cider cellars afterwards, and is a dirty caricature of the fashion that expired six months ago."

Then Dickens goes on to describe the copying clerk,

who has a large family, and is often drunk; and again we see the office lads in their first surtouts, who feel a befitting contempt for boys at day-schools, and who club together as they go home for saveloys and porter, and think there is nothing like life. Then there are sequestered nooks, "where writs are issued, judgments signed, declarations filed, and numerous other ingenious little machines put in motion for the torture and torment of His Majesty's liege subjects, and the comfort and emolument of the practitioners of the law." And it was into one of these that Mrs. Jackson went and procured the requisite documents to summon Mr. Pickwick and his adherents to the Guildhall. They were found at the George and Vulture, George Yard, Lombard Street. "Call Mr. Pickwick's servant, Tom," said the barmaid of the George and Vulture, —— "Don't trouble yourself," said Mrs. Jackson, "I've come on business. If you'll show me Mr. Pickwick's room I'll step up myself." This George and Vulture is spoken of as "good, old-fashioned, and comfortable quarters," but now it is transformed into a chop-house of great excellence, and is specially noted for its steaks and stout. There is a long dining-room, with civil waiters, and the most unblameable linen and crockery, and judges of stout say that the quality there is "supreme."

Mr. Perker, who conducted the case for Mr. Pickwick, had offices in Gray's Inn, and thither he wended his way to consult the lawyer, and suggest an interview with the great Sergeant Snubbin, who sends for Mr. Plumkey of



GRAY'S INN.



Holborn Court, Gray's Inn, which is now called South Square, but Gray's Inn appears in other works of Dickens, and will have a fuller notice.

Dickens had real characters for most of his magistrates. The worshipful Justice Fang who presided at Clerkenwell differed very little even in name from his prototype, and the good Mr. Brownlow who appeared in *Oliver Twist's* case only received treatment similar to other witnesses. The Ipswich justice had also his counterpart, and Dickens himself was present on an occasion where some one was called to answer a charge, but the prosecutor failed to appear. The presiding magistrate inquired with some dignity what he had to say for himself, and the defendant not unnaturally replied, "I don't see that I have any call to say anything, when there's nothing sworn to agen' me," to which his worship remarked, "Hullo! what have we here—a lawyer, eh? come, fellow, there are lawyers enough in court outside the dock—we don't want one in. Though," he said suddenly, brightening at the prospect of making a joke, an accomplishment that he thought he excelled at, "some of them are on the wrong side of the dock too, I daresay;" and looked towards where the representatives of the legal profession sat for the common expressions of hilarity that usually followed his jokes, but they were so obtuse that none of them saw it, and then it devolved upon the inspector to support the bench by allowing a saturnine smile to play over his features, though as it were under

protest for the loss of dignity. How his worship would have disposed of the case is not very certain, but fortunately the clerk came in and had a few words with him, after which he cleared his throat, and after making a short speech to the defendant he told him that "under all circumstances he would be *acquitted*." The original, also, of Mr. Justice Starleigh (who sat in the absence of the Chief Justice, occasioned by indisposition) was well known at the time, and though he has long ceased to be, his memory is fresh at the law courts. Guildhall, the scene of the celebrated Pickwick and Bardell trial, is a place of great historical associations that would quite fill a volume, and then pass many by. Perhaps it is not always known in the provinces why the Bardell trial should occur in a place that is celebrated over the whole world for the magnificence of its entertainments. A classic ground where at every banquet some fourteen tons of coal are consumed, and forty turtles are gathered to their ancestors, and every item is on the same stupendous scale. But the Lord Mayor's court is held at Guildhall, and it has jurisdiction over all actions without any limitations as to the amount, if the amount exceeds £50 sterling, and if the cause of the action took place within the city limits. In cases where the amount claimed is under that sum the plaintiff may still obtain a hearing if he dwells or carries on business in the city. The court sits every month, and the presiding judge is either the recorder or the common serjeant, or else a deputy appointed by them.

There is one thing that might almost be asked. Such a case as Pickwick's was appealable from this court, and why did Mr. Perker not advise him of this? Still that is a small matter, and perhaps hypercritical. Some of the old city customs yet prevail here; one of the most curious is that of foreign attachment, which enables the plaintiff, if the defendant does not enter an appearance, or if he is not within the jurisdiction of the city, to attach any goods or any debts owing to defendant if they are within the jurisdiction of the city.

It can hardly have been consolatory to Mr. Pickwick to hear Mr. Perker say, "Ten minutes past nine; time we were off, my dear sir: breach of promise trial; court is generally very full in such cases. You'd better ring for a coach, my dear sir, or we shall be rather late." There is no denying the fact that a breach of promise case is the most attractive that ever comes before a court. From the constable to the judge every one in court seems to regard such a thing as a comedy that has been produced entirely for public amusement. The defendant need not fear that his odes will suffer the fate of many other minor poems of perhaps equal merit. They are quite safe in the bundle of papers that lie before the Q.C. who is conducting the plaintiff's case. And before long he will have the pleasure of hearing them read before a delighted audience. No attempt will even be made to interrupt their demonstrations of satisfaction—demonstrations in which the journals commonly record that

“his Lordship joined heartily.” Then there is no danger of the verses being spoiled in the reading. The Q.C. may fairly be trusted to for that, and he will be sure to bring out each point to its greatest advantage, and then the result of the action is quite a certainty. I can at present only remember one instance where the plaintiff was nonsuited, though doubtless an ardent reader of these cases could tell of some more. In a number of suits it is clear that the action is brought by the cupidity of friends or through jealousy, and there is the frailest evidence to support anything like a genuine claim. Indeed, the cases that would really excite our sympathy are those we never hear of and are unknown beyond the family or the immediate friends of the sufferer. But there are instances, and those not isolated ones, where a young life is blighted through broken promises, and where the forsaken one would rather die than parade her grief in public, or even think of bringing her former admirer to account for his false professions. The case alluded to, where a verdict was given for the defendant, was curious, and at least it shows that there is nothing like “trying it on.” A damsel would seem to have possessed such attractions that she had two admirers; the second one appeared on the scene some time after the first was accepted, but his worldly circumstances were superior to those of the less fortunate suitor. To the latter she wrote a letter full of sympathy and much high-toned moral advice; she reminded him how often our brightest and



best prospects were delusive, and even took the trouble to suggest some chapters and texts that suited his lot, and she said circumstances beyond her control forced her to impose upon him. She would always look upon him as a dear, good friend, and even hoped he might not be long before he found some one more worthy of him than she was, and who would make him as happy as he deserved to be. Like a very sensible man he took the advice which the missive contained, and every one will hope that he has never had cause to regret it.

The heroine of the trial was now thoroughly off with the old love, and had no let or hindrance to take on with the new. This was, however, not quite such an easy matter. She had reckoned without her host ; she found it was only some passing fancy, and without having ever declared himself, or possibly even thought of doing so, he became engaged to quite a different lady. This was rather getting serious, and the enterprising belle had to consider the next best thing. An action was accordingly brought against admirer No. 1 on the very general principle that plaintiffs in breach of promise cases are sure to win. A thousand pounds, which he could perhaps have paid, was estimated as a fair equivalent for her blighted hopes, and the case proceeded with all due solemnity, till the letter was read on behalf of the defendant. This was rather too much, and the jury stopped the case just at the same time that the counsel sat down on his own account and returned his brief to the lady's solicitors,

who would seem to be worthy successors of Dodson and Fogg.

From some of the technical points of law, such as the neglect on the part of Dodson and Fogg to attach his property, which was easy of identification, we may dissent. "I have no objection to admit," said Sergeant Snubbin, "if it will save the examination of another witness, that Mr. Pickwick has retired from business, and is a gentleman of considerable independent property." But though this has been a difficulty with many admirers of Dickens, who are too matter-of-fact, the truth of the trial is beyond a question, and the writer knows of damages that were obtained against a tradesman in a quiet cathedral city, by a claimant whose pretences to recompense rested on no stronger rights than those of Mrs. Bardell on Mr. Pickwick. Mr. Pickwick was led by Mr. Perker to the low seat just beneath the desks for the King's counsel, who from that spot can whisper into the ear of the leading counsel in the case any instructions that may be necessary during the progress of the trial. The occupants of this seat are invisible to the great body of spectators, inasmuch as they sit on a much lower level than either the barristers or the audience, whose seats are raised above the floor.

But the Guildhall is memorable in English history. Here it was that Garnet the Jesuit was tried for his connection with the Gunpowder Plot, and, after a defence of wonderful ability and forensic skill, condemned ; and here the noble Anne Askew was doomed. In the Guildhall

also the crafty hypocritical Duke of Gloucester was proclaimed king by Buckingham. His appeal on behalf of Richard was not listened to, and he felt "marvellously abashed;" and he asked the Mayor, "What mean the people by this?" and the Mayor replied, "Sir, perchance they perceive you not well;" and then Buckingham; "somewhat louder rehearsed the same matter again, in other order and other words so well and so ornately, and nevertheless so evidently and plain, with nice gesture and countenance so comely and so convenient, that every man much marvelled that heard him, and thought they never heard in their lives so evil a tale so well told." Shakspeare has dramatised the Guildhall scene in Richard III. very grandly, Buckingham says:—

"And when my oratory grew to an end  
I bade them that did love their country's good  
Cry—God save King Richard, England's royal King!

*Glo.*—And did they so?

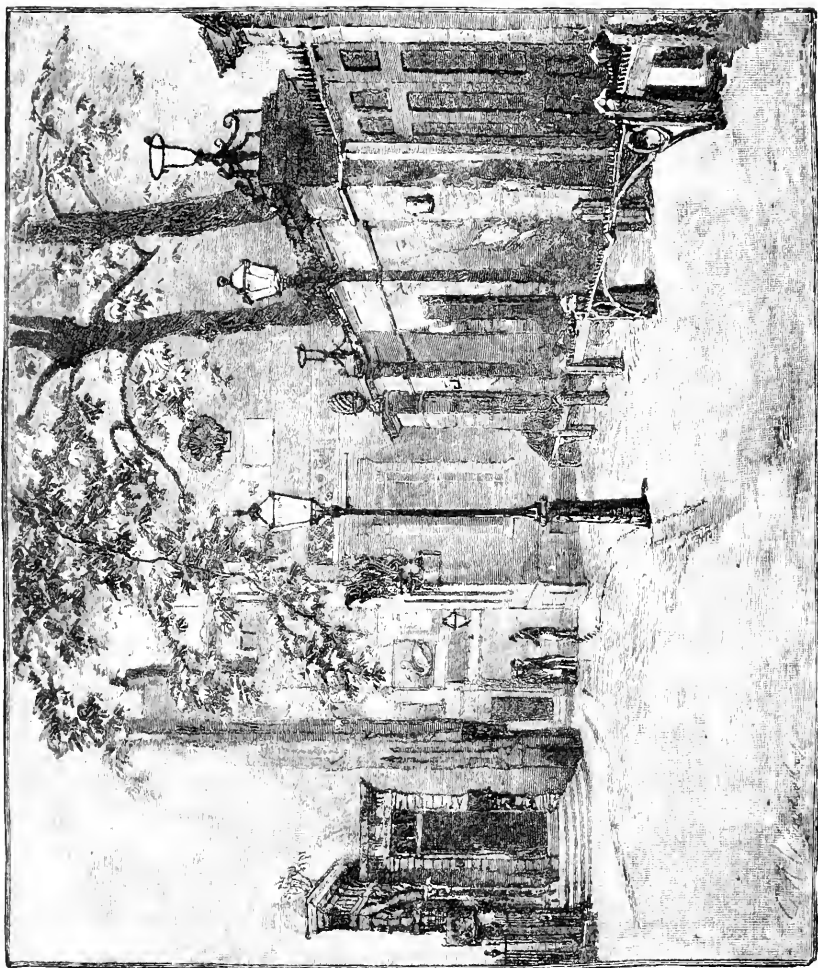
*Buckingham.*—No, so God help me, they spake not a word,  
But, like dumb statues or breathless stones,  
Stared on each other and looked deadly pale."

Among other celebrated characters Richard Whittington was associated with Guildhall, and his executors gave a sum equal to £500 of our money to have the hall paved with Purbeck marble; so great is the strength of its walls that it withstood the great fire of 1666, and towered above the flames, "in a bright and shining coat, as if it had been a palace of gold or a great building of burnished

brass." The hideous structure we see is one of Dance's, who designed several public buildings in London, but the old crypt (1411) is a splendid piece of architecture.

When the trial was over and Mr. Pickwick's heroic resolve not to pay a shilling of costs was made, and when he decided to make a journey to Bath, he sent Weller to take places on the Bath coach at the White Horse cellar. This still remains in Piccadilly, but under very changed exterior, and we should hardly recognise the description of the traveller's room, which was, "of course, uncomfortable; it would be no traveller's room if it were not. It is the right-hand parlour, into which an aspiring kitchen fire-place appears to have walked, accompanied by a rebellious poker, tongs, and shovel. It is divided into boxes for the solitary confinement of travellers, and is furnished with a clock, a looking-glass, a live waiter, which latter article is kept in a small kennel for washing glasses in a corner of the apartment."

Deans Court was happily described by Weller. "Paul's Churchyard, low archway on the carriage side, bookseller's at one corner, hotel on the other, and two porters in the middle as touts for licenses." And here David Copperfield resolved to follow the profession of the law as a proctor. He asks Steerforth what a proctor is, and receives for reply that he is a "sort of monkish attorney. He is to some faded courts held in Doctors' Commons what solicitors are to the courts of law and equity. He is a functionary whose existence in the natural course of things would



DEAN'S COURT.



have terminated about two hundred years ago." The courts consisted of ecclesiastical lawyers who in 1567 purchased a site near St. Paul's, and erected houses for the residence of judge and advocates. In 1768, however, a Royal Charter was obtained, which enabled the members to exercise ecclesiastical and admiralty claims. The president was called the Dean of Arches, and the proctors were Doctors of Law who had passed at Cambridge and Oxford. It has, since the time when Dickens wrote, been dissolved, and all its practice is open to the bar. Mr. Spenlaw considered it the perfection of human jurisprudence, and told Copperfield that "there was nothing like a disputed will when there was a neat little estate of thirty or forty thousand pounds. In such a case not only were there neat little pickings in the way of arguments at every stage of the proceedings, and mountains upon mountains of evidence upon interrogatory and counter-interrogatory (to say nothing of an appeal lying first to the delegates and then to the Lords); but the costs being pretty sure to come out of the estate at last, both parties went at it in a lively and spirited manner, and expense was no consideration." A lawyer of much ability who used to practise in this court summed up the constituent parts of a case very concisely when he said there were three phases of a suit. "The first was the costs, the next was the custom of the court, and the third was the merits of the case;" and to such a luminous exposition of the privileges that are conferred, I would not add one single word.

## CHAPTER III.

## NICHOLAS NICKLEBY.

IN *Nicholas Nickleby*, though the plot and the narrative are very sad, the spirits of Dickens rise gaily at times. He finds himself among his beloved coaches and quaint hotels, and luxuriates in a coach journey to Yorkshire. The inns that Dickens described and chronicled so well have disappeared from London, at least in the form that they were known to him, but on the Surrey side of the river we may yet find traces of genuine ancient hosteleries which he delighted in. The Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, has for long been a thing of the past—the Holborn Viaduct and its approaches have swept it away—but when *Nickleby* was written there were some very quaint houses here. There are still, however, many bits of old London left in the neighbourhood, such as the quaint row of overhanging gables that we see in the houses a little farther west opposite Furnival's Inn, and in Shoe Lane and Fetter Lane. All these places had a fascination for Dickens, even from his early days. "To be taken out," Foster says, "for a walk into the real town, especially if it were anywhere



about Covent Garden or the Strand, perfectly entranced him with pleasure. But most of all he had a profound attraction of repulsion to St. Giles. If he could only induce whomsoever took him out to take him through Seven Dials he was supremely happy. "Good heavens!" he would exclaim, "what wild visions of prodigies of wickedness, want, and beggary arose in my mind out of that place!" Let any one see Snow Hill now and he will hardly believe that the picture of it which Dickens gives could have described it as it appeared almost at the middle of the present century. "The pavement of Snow Hill had been baking and frying all day in the heat, and the twain Saracen's heads guarding the entrance to the hostelry, of whose name and sign they are the duplicate presentments, looked—or seemed in the eyes of jaded and footsore passers-by to look—more vicious than usual, after blistering and scorching in the sun, when, in one of the inn's smallest sitting-rooms, through whose open window there rose, in a palpable steam, wholesome exhalations from reeking coach-horses; the usual furniture of a tea-table was displayed in neat and inviting order, flanked by large joints of roast and boiled, a tongue, a pigeon-pie, a cold fowl, a tankard of ale, and other little matters of like kind which are generally understood to belong more particularly to solid lunches, stage-coach dinners, or unusually substantial breakfasts." This was the same inn that introduces us to Squeers in the fourth chapter of the book, and the descriptions in each case are minute and graphic.

One great value of Dickens's writings is that he gives little details of passing things which will always illustrate the days in which he lived and the condition of the people, and that by pen as clearly as Hogarth has recorded his own age by pencil. The coach which left the Saracen's Head for the north country passed through the quiet towns that studded Bedford, Northampton, and Nottingham, and that had never been startled by a railway whistle. Few of the inhabitants had ever been to London, at least few if compared with those that now are quite familiar with it, and Dickens speaks of the vague ideas they had about Snow Hill, and how often they must wonder what sort of a place it was. They see the name on the coach as it passes by, and the "words emblazoned in all the legibility of gilt letters and dark shading," but they have some "shadowy and undefined notion of a place whose name is frequently before their eyes or often in their ears; and what a vast number of random ideas there must be perpetually floating about regarding this same Snow Hill. The name is such a good one. Snow Hill too, coupled with a Saracen's head: picturing to us something stern and rugged." He thinks that people in the more northern towns must have imagined that it was a bleak moor, open to piercing storms, a dark and gloomy heath, "lonely by day and scarcely to be thought of by honest people at night." This, he says, was probably the impression of the rustic population "through which the Saracen's Head rushes each day and night with mysterious

and ghost-like punctuality, holding its swift and headlong course in all weathers, and seeming to bid defiance to the very elements themselves." But the "reality is rather different," though, as he adds, "it is by no means to be despised notwithstanding."

It was situated "just on that particular part of Snow Hill where omnibus horses going eastwards seriously think of falling down on purpose, and where horses in hackney cabriolets going westwards not unfrequently fall by accident." Two Saracens' heads and shoulders guarded the portal, and it was formerly the pride and delight of the Toms and Jerries of the day to remove these to other and less suitable quarters.

There was, of course, a quadrangle, as was customary with all inns of any pretensions, and on each side of this were ranged the galleries and bedrooms. The etching that appears opposite page 38 in the edition of 1839 conveys a good idea of the old inn as it appeared in those days, and the accessories are very complete.

The journey from the Saracen's Head to the north is told with all the power of Dickens in his best moments. Very little is said in the way of actual description, but he has evidently written the account of Nickleby's departure as he stood in the yard of an inn. "A minute's bustle, a banging of coach-doors, a swaying of the vehicle as the heavy coachman and still heavier guard climbed into their seats; a cry of all right, a few notes from the horn, and the coach was gone, rattling over the stones of Smithfield."

Now in this graphic account, which only occupies a few lines, and would hardly tell us more if even it were much longer, we see the daily departure of the intercourse between London and York and the north. Of course there was the Liverpool coach, and the Western and Eastern coaches, but we can gather from the short extract how isolated different parts of England were. The "swaying" of the vehicle is very suggestive; it tells us of a high chariot coach on springs, such as we see on page 38 of the first edition of *Nicholas Nickleby*. One is reminded of the celebrated picture in Hogarth's Country Inn-yard, where the coach is almost like one of the bathing-machines we see at the watering-places.

The coach owners of Dickens's time might indeed look back with astonishment at their predecessors. In 1673, a writer, who styles himself "The Lover of his Country," asks, "What advantage can it be to a man's health to be called out of bed into these coaches an hour or two before day in the morning?" and then he describes the shortcomings of the service, in which the passengers are not only crippled with boxes and bundles, but, "laid fast in foul ways, and forced to wade up to the knees in mire, till teams of horses can be sent to pull the coach out." Even in 1725 a journey by stage-coach from London to Exeter was thought worth publishing in book form. It occupied four days, and was beset with trouble and difficulty and danger. Hogarth's coach, which is small in accommodation, is hung on immense

springs back and front, to accommodate its movements to the inequalities of the road, and Dickens's coach in *Nicholas Nickleby* was indeed perfection itself if it is compared with any of the vehicles of a preceding age. It too was perched high on springs, though the necessity for such contrivances was greatly diminished, owing to the even macadamised roads that then intersected the country. So level were the roads when *Nickleby* was written, and so perfect was the service of the coaches, that unless the weather was very much against them indeed their arrivals might be calculated upon with as much certainty almost as those of railway trains. The coaches may indeed have been very inferior in convenience and accommodation to modern omnibuses, but the horses and the drivers and the stable helps were in the highest state of efficiency, and the one in which Nicholas was seated no doubt deserved the high "approval of all judges of coach-horses congregated at the Peacock, but more especially of the helpers who stood with the cloths over their arms watching the coach till it disappeared, and then lounged admiringly stablewards, bestowing various gruff encomiums on the beauty of the turn-out." So perfect was the service in the year when *Nickleby* was written that the writer can remember an amazing feat being the subject of general conversation. It occurred, if he remembers well, on the London and Liverpool road, and was completely successful. The four horses of a coach were changed without the wheels ever actually stopping for two or three stages

of the journey. This was performed by having in readiness an extra number of grooms—some very handy private ones had been secured—and the men ran by the horses, which had slackened their speed, unbuckled the harness, new horses were attached, the traces drawn before the wheels had actually come to a standstill, and the men running alongside the horses, which were kept on slow time, completed the toilet.

At Eaton Socon, which the coach reached in those days at one o'clock, there was all ready a "good coach dinner," which the passengers were quite ready to partake of. Either by accident or design this place is called Eton Slowcombe in Dickens. Coaching dinners were very different from anything we see now at railway stations. The writer can just remember one or two, and they formed the most agreeable episode in the day's journey. There was hot steak or chops, and a good supply of poultry, with a cold boiled ham and generally a round of beef. The charge was moderate, and there was time, too, allowed quite sufficient to appreciate the good fare. The coachman was in his proper place at the table, and however rampant the steeds might be, it was certain they could not start without him. All was peace and quiet—no frightful steam whistles within a few yards, and no bells or shoutings. With railways now what is in grim pleasantries termed refreshment is only an allowance of four or five minutes and the chance of securing what a crowded counter can afford. In old coaching days there

were no sandwiches of problematical age under glass beehives, or any of the other substitutes for lunch with which modern travellers are so familiar; but the mid-day meal was cheery and genial. Now, at the railway buffet, the exigencies are so great and the time so little to spare that it must be remembered, in behalf of the employés, they are, by the force of circumstances, almost compelled to assume a semi-hostile attitude to the travellers. Indeed the sojourners themselves do not as a rule look particularly amiable. Railway travelling is not very exhilarating, and the occupants of the various compartments when they meet, let us say at Rugby, from their various carriages, and probably in strange attire, are apt to assume the expression of "who in the world are you?" as plainly as if they expressed the inquiry in as many words.

The coach dinner, however, was over at Eaton Socon, and the coach resumed its journey; "a stage or two further on the lamps were lighted." This is quite in keeping with the time of day, and confirms the tale that Dickens in this journey is narrating one of the passages of his own life. The snow-storm had begun to set fairly in upon them. The easterly winds from the "wash" as they pass over the vast fens of Crowland and Spalding make this in winter one of the most desolate and dreary parts of England. "The weather was intensely and bitterly cold, a great deal of snow had fallen from time to time, and the wind was intolerably keen."

But one of the most graphic descriptions in all

Dickens's writings is the entry of the coach into Stamford. The time they were due at this quaint old town would be about eight or nine o'clock, for they were much impeded by the snow-drift. "The night and the snow came on together, and dismal enough they were. There was no sound to be heard but the howling of the wind ; for the noise of the wheels, and the tread of the horses' feet, were rendered inaudible by the thick coating of snow which covered the earth, and was fast increasing every moment."

Probably the coach would just pull up at the George and then proceed to change horses at the Stamford. The George is on the south side of the Welland, and one of the curious sign-boards that are now so uncommon stretches across the road with the name of the hostelry painted on it. After leaving the George an ancient bridge spans the Welland, and on the right hand side, not far from the water's edge, rises the beautiful spire of St. Mary's, a spire which was built in the earliest part of the reign of Edward I., and has been more frequently used as an example for modern masonry than any other in England. The later spire of St. Martin's appears almost at once on the left, but farther on in the town, and it is full of interest as containing the monuments of so many of the Cecil family, whose chief, the great Lord Burghley, lies buried here ; and though these churches have not escaped the cruel hand of the "restorer," there is plenty of interest left untouched in them.



Stamford contains five churches in all, though at one time it could boast of nine more, and those parish ones.

The Welland runs through ancient buildings that remind one of the Loire or the Rhone ; but when Nickleby passed through, all its charms were sealed. The town was ill lighted, and the inhabitants were in-doors. "The streets of Stamford were deserted as they passed through the town, and its old churches rose dark and frowning from the whitened ground."

The road from Stamford to Grantham is pleasant enough in summer time, but in the winter everything was exceedingly dreary. About eight miles of it lie in the woody county of Rutland, and at the 99th milestone from London it again enters Lincolnshire, and proceeds to Grantham. A vivid picture of the comforts that awaited coach travellers who had time on hand is conveyed. Twenty miles farther on two of the front outside passengers, wisely availing themselves of their arrival at one of the best inns in England, turned in for the night at the George at Grantham.

What a picture the next sentence conveys of the condition of those who were left behind ! "The remainder wrapped themselves more closely in their coats and cloaks, and leaving the light and warmth of the town behind them, pillowed themselves against the luggage, and prepared, with many half-suppressed moans, to again encounter the sweeping blast that swept across the open country."

If we continue the coach road towards Newark we

shall reach Long Bemington and Bemington Common, and this precisely answers the description of the spot where the vehicle was upset, and the travellers, not much the worse, exchanged their quarters for the much greater comforts of a country public-house, with its sanded floor and blazing fire. It was not till nearly morning that the new coach which had been sent for to Grantham arrived, and the passengers once more resumed their dreary journey.

Little is said about the rest of the route, but the passengers arrived by six o'clock in the evening at Greta Bridge, having thus been thirty-four hours on the road from London.

The little boys, Nicholas, and Squeers, were put down with their united luggage at the George Inn. It is now a large granary and flour store, and the part which was the inn has been converted into a comfortable, roomy dwelling-house. The bridge which is shown crosses over a branch of the Tees, and the house on the opposite side from the arch which is shown seems almost to rise out of the beautiful stream.

There appears to be some little confusion about the inns here. Dickens says that Squeers and his party were put down at the George and New Inn. Now these were two separate houses of call, and were about half a mile from each other. It may have been that Dickens did not desire the identification to be quite too easy and close. New Inn is less picturesque than the George, though it will be seen that it is a roomy and comfortable dwelling-

place. But the beauty which fringes the valley of the Tees has gone, and it looks out towards the moors.



THE GEORGE INN.

Dickens does not exactly say in as many words where the village is situated that holds the Dotheboys Hall of

world-wide fame ; but if we take a map of Yorkshire we shall have no difficulty at all in identifying the village of Bowes as the place of such shocking memory.

Greta Bridge was the destination of the party, and the coach rolled on to Barnard Castle. There are two roads besides the one the coach took—one to the right, which leads to Old Richmond and Wycliff and Orrington ; and the other to the left, which leads past Rokeby Castle to Bowes. Had they been bound for any of the places mentioned as the destinations of the former road they would have dismounted at a place called Newsham, some two miles before they came to Greta Bridge, and there they would have been considerably nearer their destination. There is therefore only one road left where Dotheboys Hall could be found, and that is to the left.

Squeers and Nicholas went first in the pony-chaise and left the cart in which the boys were to follow at their leisure. “ ‘Are you cold, Nickleby?’ inquired Squeers, after they had travelled some distance in silence,” and receiving an affirmative reply, was asked how far it was to Dotheboys, and was told that it was “about three mile from here.” Now in a general way of conversation or description this might be fairly considered in all to amount to five or six miles, and this exactly lands us in Bowes.

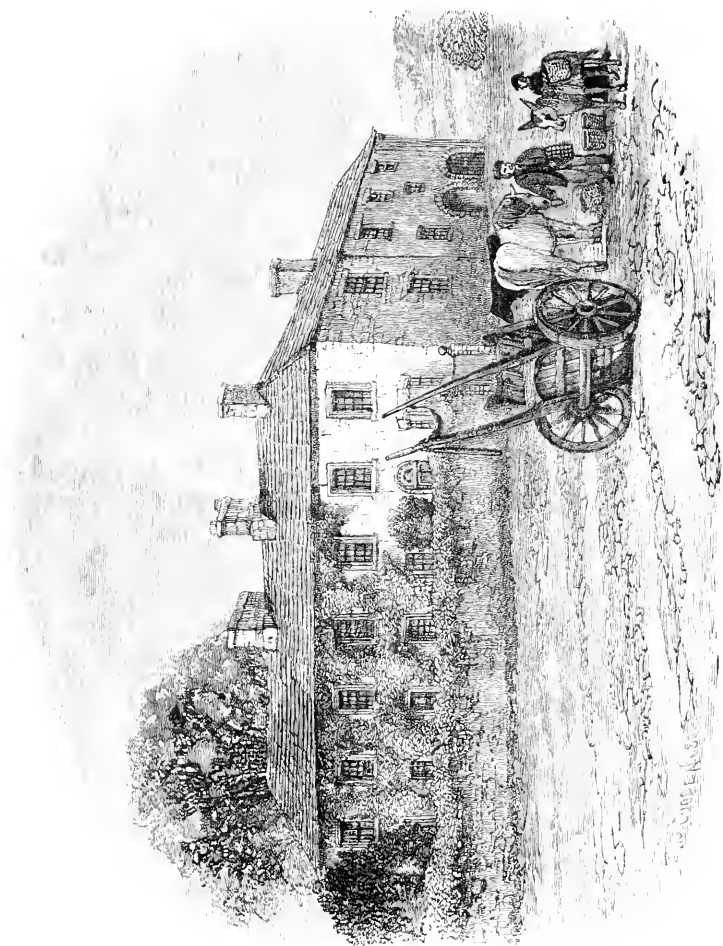
At the top of Bowes is the long house which is shown here, and is even sometimes called Dotheboys Hall in their humorous moments by the older inhabitants. The village is steep and picturesque, and about the middle of



NEW INN, GRETA BRIDGE.

it is the Unicorn Inn, where Dickens stayed for a considerable time when he wrote the book. It is a comfortable little place, and the wainscoted room which he occupied was pointed out to me. Now it may be a somewhat congenial task to remove some of the obloquy that attaches to the memory of this house, though in doing so I would carefully avoid imputing any but the most praiseworthy motives to Dickens.

The fact is that school did actually require reform, but so did others, and those which were destined for the use of scholars who possessed many more advantages than the students at Dotheboys. Some schools where the sons of the wealthy were sent, but which were presided over by bilious or dyspeptic tyrants, were flourishing when *Nicholas Nickleby* was written, and they are yet very fresh indeed in the memory of men not advanced beyond the middle stage of life. There are the memories, at any rate, of one Exeter College man, who was an undoubted scholar, and who conducted a private school at a great maritime port in England with abundant financial success, for no sum was grudged to get a boy placed with him; yet, though the pupils for the most part resided within a radius of ten miles, and could either walk or drive to some home of comfort, there are few that would not have preferred Dotheboys Hall with all its shortcomings to four or five years under this learned but irresponsible tyrant. There is an excellent article in *Belgravia* of July 1881, entitled the "Unrepresented Majority," in which the early life of



DOTHERBOYS HALL.





some of the upper classes is told with great power and feeling. It would be a very grateful task to make some extracts from it, but it ought to be read at length (for it is only nine pages long) by every one.

Mr. Squeers was the representative of a great number of Yorkshire schoolmasters, who undertook to educate and board pupils at £20 or 20 guineas per annum. His actual name began with the same initial letter as the fictitious schoolmaster of Dickens, and ended with w, and was only one syllable in length, but it was one we frequently meet with in every part of England. He was not an ignorant man, but he had acquired even some knowledge of Latin, if not Greek indeed, at a public school, though I do not know if he went to any university. He had an enormous school, and rented rooms at the houses in the village or the farm-steads in the neighbourhood, to accommodate his numerous scholars. His gross takings were, it is said, from £3000 to £4000 per annum. Oatmeal porridge formed a decided staple of diet, and the pupils were employed for part of each day in tilling the land that belonged to the house, and which was of considerable extent. When Squeers and Nickleby arrived at Dotheboys, the first inquiry seems to have been, "How are the cows?" and the next, "How are the pigs?" and when he received satisfactory replies to these queries he appeared satisfied. The fact is, that he kept a fair head of live stock, and one was slaughtered each week for the use of the school. A connection of the schoolmaster who is in

independent circumstances lives now at the house, and some of his immediate descendants yet live, and, it is said, enjoy the good regards of their neighbours.



YARD AND PUMP AT DOTHEBOYS.

It was not, as before stated, Squeers's school that ought alone to be gibbeted, but others of that period in high station, whose evil influences have descended to the

present day. One sentence in the eighth chapter of *Nickleby* accurately represents the way in which pupils were regarded in many private schools of all degrees. "The fact was, both Mr. and Mrs. Squeers viewed the boys in the light of their natural and proper enemies."

Smike appeared when Squeers arrived at the house on the first night; and Nicholas had time to observe that the school was a long, cold-looking building, one storey high, with a few straggling outbuildings behind, and a barn and stable adjoining. This is the view looking through the gate at which Smike appeared, and through which Squeers entered and directed Nicholas to go to the front door, while he went round to let him in. The pump is visible from the road, and it suggested the pleasant remark Nicholas heard from Mr. Squeers the first morning he came. "Here's a pretty go, the pump's froze . . . You can't wash yourself this morning."

The weary days passed by as Nicholas saw the cruelty and wickedness of the schoolmaster; and only one slight interlude, when Miss Squeers invited her friend "Tilda" to come, with her accepted admirer, John Browdie, and be introduced to the unsuspecting Nicholas, whom she believed that she had smitten deeply. The scene is an admirable one, because it only dawned upon Nicholas during the evening what the gathering was for, and his amazement knew no bounds. Mrs. Squeers had some business that took her two days away from home, and got up outside the coach when it changed horses at Greta Bridge. On

occasions such as these, when Mrs. Squeers was away, it was the custom of her husband "to drive over to the market town every evening on pretence of urgent business, and stop till ten or eleven o'clock at a tavern he much affected," so that his acquiescence in the proposed gathering was very readily granted, offering indeed as it did "a sort of compromise with Miss Squeers."

The town he drove to was Barnard Castle, about four miles away, on the borders of Durham, and the inn was the King's Head. The people there recollect Dickens well, and show the room in the hostelry where he used to write. The same King's Head remains, though it has recently been much enlarged, but the old part has not been touched at all. It is to this inn that Newman Noggs alludes in his letter to Nicholas, when the latter left the Saracen's Head yard in the north country coach: "When porters were screwing the last reluctant sixpences, itinerant newsmen making the last offer of a morning paper, and the horses giving the last impatient rattle in their harness, Nicholas felt some one softly pull him by the leg. He looked down, and there stood Newman Noggs, who pushed a dirty letter into his hand." This letter Nicholas only thought of when it fell from his pocket the first night of his introduction to the school, and then he opened it. Newman Noggs was a borrower at his uncle Ralph Nickleby's at one time, having spent a patrimony in horses and hounds and general extravagance. He is a real character, and was known at Barnard Castle and the neigh-

bourhood. When Ralph Nickleby had quite exhausted his means he took him on as a clerk at a low weekly stipend ; and there is a thread of truth even in this part of his history. The letter said that he knew the world, which Nicholas did not, or he would not be bound on such a journey as he was going ; and he invited him to his lodging in London if ever he had the necessity to go there, which he described as the "corner of Silver Street and James Street, with a bar door both ways;" and this may easily be identified now. He adds in a postscript, "If you should go near Barnard Castle, there is good ale at the King's Head. Say you know me, and I am sure they will not charge you for it. You may say Mr. Noggs there, for I was a gentleman then—I was indeed." The inn still draws ale which those who are qualified to judge declare is excellent. And not only Dickens, but the prototype of Newmann Noggs are yet remembered. Opposite the King's Arms, and a little lower down the street, is a watch and clock maker's establishment, which was plainly in view of Dickens's sitting-room at the hotel. The proprietor of this establishment is called Humphreys ; and it was from this that Dickens took the name of one of his most beautiful works, *Master Humphreys' Clock*. He sent the proprietor of the shop a letter that still exists and is valued beyond price.

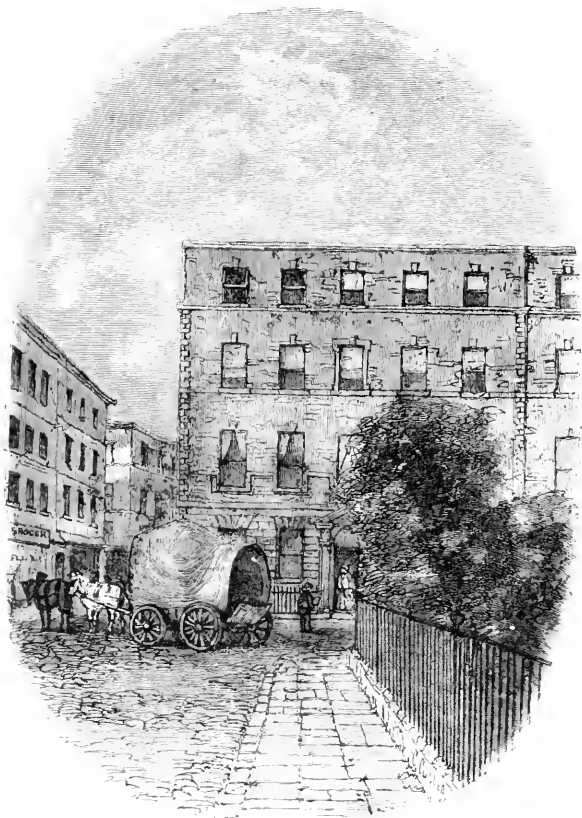
Little is told of Nickleby's tramp to London after he had left Dotheboys Hall, followed by poor Smike. The first night he lay at a cottage where beds were cheaply let, and

the next he arrived at Boroughbridge, which rate of journey would average about 20 miles a day. Boroughbridge is a pleasant town on the Ouse, a few miles below Ripon, and is remembered in history as the place where Edward II. defeated the Earl of Lancaster and sent him to his castle at Pontefract for execution.

While Nickleby was away, however, the peace of his sister Kate was disturbed by the machinations of Ralph Nickleby, who perhaps in this instance went farther than he intended.

The house shown as Ralph Nickleby's mansion in Golden Square is a large double one, and there is no other which at all would suit the requirements of the case. It is, indeed, the only double one in the Square. The one which was occupied by Cardinal Wiseman has been pointed out, but in every way this one which is shown appears to have superior claims. It is the only double house in the Square; and the splendour which Kate saw, and the spacious rooms both upstairs and downstairs, could not possibly be contained in any other. This the more especially as "Ralph Nickleby was not what you would strictly speaking call a merchant, neither was he a banker, nor an attorney, nor a special pleader, nor a notary." But in addition to the spacious rooms he had so splendidly furnished, his own business premises were under the same roof, so that there must have been two frontages. His business was simply that of a quiet usurer—one who has abundant resources, and advances on a reversionary interest, or discounts

paper that may be secure enough in time, but which



RALPH NICKLEBY'S MANSION.

the timid borrower has some reason for keeping quiet and out of the knowledge of his friends. There is no incon-

sistency whatever in Ralph Nickleby being a grasping usurer, and coveting every shilling he had even a remote chance of securing, and being also most lavish in his private expenditure. That we see every day in life, and among no class perhaps more conspicuously than the Jew money-lenders. They have their pound of flesh, and haggle over sixpence ; but when they go to Brighton or Folkestone they are the very best customers to the hotels. Their wives and daughters quite eclipse all other citizens in purple and fine linen ; and not only do their lords fare sumptuously every day, but no vintage of *Chateau Margaux* or *Clos de Vougeôt* is too costly for their tables. Here Dickens is quite consistent, and the grandeur that Kate saw is not at all inconsistent with the class that Ralph Nickleby belonged to. Kate, when she expected to see at the most Newman Noggs, in a clean white shirt front, and rather got up for the occasion, was surprised to find the door opened before the cabman's knock had ceased, and "to see that the opener was a man in handsome livery, and that there were two or three others in the hall. There was no doubt about its being the right house, however, for there was the name upon the door ; and she accepted the laced coat-sleeve which was tendered to her, and entering the house was ushered upstairs into a back drawing-room, where she was left alone."

There seems to be a little obscurity about this part of the work ; but it would appear as if in reality Ralph Nickleby's intentions towards his niece were of no exactly



unworthy kind. He seems to have been as fond of her as he was capable of being of anything in human shape, and would certainly have shielded her from wrong ; and it is not improbable that the idea to be conveyed is that he wished her to become the wife of Lord Verisopht, though indeed such a fate would have been far from a desirable climax. Still he could have secured her in her own right an ample revenue ; and though such a scheme is not set forth very fully in the narrative, it is the only possible explanation of his conduct, and furthermore it is very much such a view of life as the usurer would be apt to take.

The eventful journey from London to Portsmouth is told with all the enthusiasm that Dickens has for the country in every phase of its appearance, either in summer, or spring, or winter.

Nicholas and Smike had made up their minds to leave London and push their way in the world, or rather Nicholas had made up his mind to do so for them both, and they left London before sunrise in the morning of an early spring day to journey on towards Portsmouth, where Nicholas had some vague idea that he could ship on board a sea-going vessel and learn his work on the voyage, and that Smike would be able to do the same.

The manager of the troupe that he met on the way, Mr. Crummles, when Nicholas had communicated his intention to him, showed him the futility of his expectations. "There's not a skipper or a mate that would think you worth your salt when he could get a practised hand,

and they are as plentiful there as the oysters in the streets.'

"'What do you mean?' asked Nicholas, alarmed at this prediction, and the confident tone in which it was uttered. 'Men are not born able seamen, they must be reared, I suppose?'"

Happy, indeed, it would be, if Mr. Crummles' estimate of the abundance of seamen were true now, but the fact is that since his *résumé* of the supply of British seamen, British ships are manned by such hands as Nicholas and Smike to an extent that is not generally known, always excepting that the unskilled hands are hardly likely to bring with them such good characters as the heroes of Dickens.

All the means that Nicholas possessed amounted to little over a pound, and so it behoved him to make the best of his time and his money.

The way from London to Guildford lies through Kingston-on-Thames. There is, indeed, another Kingston, called Kingston-on-Rail, which has sprung up into existence since *Nickleby* was written, and happily this has left the old Kingston untouched. Here Nicholas would tell Smike that the Saxon monarchs were crowned, and here they resided, and he would point out the stone on which they sat for their coronation, but poor Smike's thoughts were far away, and as they passed through the town Nicholas endeavoured to draw from him some sort of history of his early life, little suspecting that he was his

first cousin. All this conversation seems to have occurred as they passed on their road through Wandsworth and by Richmond Park.

“It was a cold, dry, foggy morning in early spring. A few meagre shadows flitted to and fro in the misty streets, and occasionally there loomed through the dull vapour the heavy outline of some hackney-coach wending homewards, which, drawing slowly nearer, rolled jangling by, scattering the thin crust of frost from its whitened roof, and soon was lost again in the cloud.” This is even yet an exact description of the east end of London in early spring. Public-houses are not open, the earliest of shopmen are in bed, and will be for an hour or two, and those people we meet with are either hardly bent on an honest errand, or else some very exceptional occurrence has called them out of doors so soon.

“At intervals were heard the tread of slipshod feet ; the chilly cry of the poor sweep as he crept out shivering to his early toil ; the heavy footfall of the official watcher of the night pacing slowly up and down, and cursing the tardy hours that still intervened between him and sleep ; the rumbling of ponderous carts and waggons ; the roll of the lighter vehicles which carried buyers and sellers to the different markets ; the sound of ineffectual knocking at the doors of heavy sleepers ;—all these noises fell on the ear from time to time ;” and this vivid description is true to the present day, even though the whole face of England has changed through railways. Still, let any one

walk not only through London, but through any considerable English town ; supposing, for example, he wishes to catch a train at four or five o'clock in the morning, and he will find just such interjectional noises as those which fell with a dull echo on the ear of Nicholas.

No mention is made of Guildford, through which the travellers passed, and which was very familiar to Dickens. This is rather singular, as its steep street and quaint old town hall, with the well-known clock projecting far over the road on ornamental iron scroll-work, would have been a happy subject for the author's pen ; but at any rate they passed through the old place, and, after a walk of about six miles farther, they arrived at Godalming where they rested their weary limbs for the night, and slept soundly in two humble beds they had bargained for.

An early spring day is wonderfully well described in this part of *Nickleby*. It was of course raw and foggy when they left London, but as they emerged from the fog the sky grew bright, and Nicholas and his charge walked on in the hopefulness of youth, and in the most buoyant of spirits. The city, when they turned round to look at it, was still enveloped in a dense vapour, which reminded them almost of the exhalations of those who had left London for the country, but whose souls remained behind to pore over their schemes of gain, "as if they found greater profit and attraction there than in the quiet region above." "It was clear and fair in the open air, but occasionally in some low spots they came upon patches of

mist which the sun had not yet driven from their strongholds ; but these were soon passed, and as they laboured up the hills beyond, it was pleasant to look back and see how the sluggish mass rolled heavily off before the cheering influence of day. A broad, fine, honest sun lighted up the green pastures, and dimpled water with the semblance of summer, while it left the travellers all the invigorating freshness of that early time of year. The ground seemed elastic under their feet ; the sheep-bells were music to their ears ; and exhilarated by exercise, and stimulated by hope, they pushed onward with the strength of lions." Sheep-bells may sound strangely to those who are not accustomed to downs or great expanses of country where sheep are pastured, but their utility is obvious ; the strayer from the fold can be heard and tracked out and recovered.

"The day wore on, and all these bright colours subsided, and assumed a quieter tint, like young hopes softened down by time, or youthful features by degrees resolving into the calm and serenity of age. But they were scarcely less beautiful in their slow decline than they had been in their prime ; for nature gives to every time and season beauties of its own ; from morning to night, as from the cradle to the grave, is but a succession of changes so gentle and easy that we can scarcely mark their progress. To Godalming they came at last, where they bargained for two humble beds, and slept soundly. In the morning they were astir, though not quite so early as

the sun, and again afoot, if not with all the freshness of yesterday, still with enough of hope and spirit to bear them cheerily on."

The taste for natural scenery is conspicuous in all the account of this journey, and the description of a walk through Surrey will remind any one of the natural features of this beautiful county, a county that has much to show us just as nature left it, and that can boast of at any rate one stretch of country that covers two hundred square miles and never has heard the railway's whistle.

Dickens brings us to the region of the Downs—the North Downs and South Downs—that are so dear to the artist and the holiday-seeker. The district we call the North Downs had been passed over by Nicholas and Smike long before they had the good luck to fall in with Mr. Crummles and his gifted family, and this district is vividly pictured in the twenty-second chapter of the book. There is a system of chalk ranges south of the Thames which would seem to have their centre in Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire. The North Downs run in an easterly direction through Surrey and Kent, and terminate in the familiar cliffs of Dover. The South Downs run through Sussex, and terminate in Beechy Head; and it is the scenery of the Downs that is so graphically described in the twenty-second chapter of *Nicholas*, which is one of the most popular and beautiful in the book.

"It was a harder day's journey than they had already performed, for there were long and weary hills to climb.

and in journeys, as in life, it is a great deal easier to go down hill than up. However, they kept on with unabated perseverance, and the hill has not yet lifted its face to heaven that perseverance will not gain the summit of at last. They walked upon the rim of the Devil's Punch Bowl, and Smike listened with greedy interest as Nicholas read the inscription upon the stone which, reared upon the wild spot, tells of a foul and treacherous murder committed there by night. The grass on which they stood had once been dyed with gore, and blood of the murdered man had run down, drop by drop, into the hollow which gives the place its name. 'The Devil's Punch Bowl,' thought Nicholas, as he looked into the void, 'never held fitter liquor than that.' Onward they kept with steady purpose, and entered at length upon a wide and spacious tract of downs with every variety of little hill and plain to change their verdant surface. Here there shot up almost perpendicularly into the sky a height so steep as to be hardly accessible to any but sheep and goats that fed upon its sides, and there stood a huge mound of green, sloping and tapering off so delicately, and merging so gently into the level ground, that you could scarce define its limits. Hills swelling above each other, and undulations, shapely, uncouth, smooth, and rugged, graceful, and grotesque, thrown negligently side by side, bounded the views in each direction, while frequently, with unexpected noise, there uprose from the ground a flight of crows, who, cawing and wheeling around

the nearest hills, as if uncertain of their course, suddenly poised themselves upon the wing, and skimmed down the long vista of some opening valley with the speed of very light itself."

The tale of the murder does not appear in any of the reviews of Dickens's works ; but it is one of exceeding wickedness and barbarity. Near Esher in Surrey, where Cardinal Wolsley was banished by Henry VIII., three sailors, Edward Lonagan, Michael Casey, and James Marshall, fell in with some one whose name is unknown, but who is said also to have followed the sea. They were impecunious, and he showed them hospitality, and not only so, but he promised to bear their expenses to Portsmouth, where they were going to ship. At the Red Lion Inn in Road Lane, beyond Godalming, they stopped for refreshment, and there, as it came out in evidence at the trial, two labouring men met with them, and soon after on returning homewards they fell upon their track, and when they came to the "Devil's Punch Bowl," they thought they saw a sheep that had fallen down, but not being quite certain about their conjecture they descended, and found the body of the murdered man. His companions, as it appeared by the evidence, and as one of them afterwards confessed, had murdered him under circumstances of great atrocity too great indeed even to record, and robbed him of the money he proposed to share with them. They stripped him afterwards of his apparel, and were in the act of selling it at Sheet, near



Petersfield, when they were apprehended, for the labouring men at once raised an alarm, and the atrocious murderers were captured. They were tried at the ensuing Spring Assizes, and on the 7th of April they were hanged and gibbeted at Hind Head Common, near the scene of their shocking crime. There are persons yet living who remember to have seen the gibbet on which they were exposed; and in some of Turner's early pictures of this part of Surrey this gibbet is shown. Now, of course, it is down, but Sir William Erle has erected a granite cross upon the spot where it stood. The stone that commemorates the foul deed yet stands as it did when Nicholas read the history to the wondering ears of poor Smike. It stands on the edge of the deep amphitheatre called the Devil's Punch Bowl:—

Erected  
In detestation of a barbarous  
murder  
committed here on an unknown sailor  
on September 24th 1786  
by Edward Lonagan, Michael Casey,  
and James Marshall,  
who were all taken the same day  
and hung in chains  
near this place

Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man  
shall his blood be shed.—Gen. chap. ix., verse 6.

and on the other side of the stone is inscribed—

This stone  
was erected  
by order, and at  
the cost of  
James Stibwell, Esq.  
of  
Cosford, 1786.  
cursed be the man who injureth  
or removeth this stone.

The murdered man was buried in Thursley Churchyard, and there is a headstone with a curious sculpture in bas-relief, representing three ruffians killing a sailor. It was erected by subscription, and has the following singular epitaph:—

In memory of a generous but unfortunate sailor, who was barbarously murdered on Hind-head on Sep. 24 1786 by three villains after he had liberally treated them and promised them his further assistance on the road to Portsmouth.

When pitying eyes to see my grave shall come,  
And with a generous tear bedew my tomb,  
Here shall they read my melancholy fate,  
With murder and barbarity complete :  
In perfect health and in the flower of age  
I fell a victim to Three Ruffians' rage.

<sup>1</sup>On bended knees I mercy strove t'obtain,  
Their thirst for blood made all entreaties vain,

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<sup>1</sup> This would seem from the confession alluded to not to have been a figure of speech, but a literal record of fact.

No dear relation or still dearer friend  
Weeps my sad lot or miserable end ;  
Yet o'er my sad remains—my name unknown  
A generous Public have inscribed this stone.

Portsmouth, the resting-place of Nicholas and Smike for a brief period of comparative quiet, has retained all the features that they saw nearly unaltered.



PORTSMOUTH THEATRE.

The carriage that had conveyed the party stopped at Portsmouth Bridge, and there they disembarked. "We'll

set down here," said the manager, "and the boys will take him round to the stable, and call at my lodgings for the luggage. You had better let yours be taken there for the present ;" and then they accompanied the manager to the theatre.

"They passed a great many bills pasted against the walls and displayed in windows, wherein the names of Mr. Vincent Crummles, Mrs. Vincent Crummles, Master Crummles, Master P. Crummles, and Miss Crummles, were printed in very large letters, and everything else in very small ones. And turning at length into an entry, in which was a strong smell of orange-peel and lamp-oil, with an under-current of sawdust, groped their way through a dark passage, and, descending a step or two, threaded a little maze of canvas screens and paint-pots, and emerged upon the stage of the Portsmouth Theatre." The description of a theatre in daylight is graphically told. There was the reassuring voice of Mr. Crummles. "Here we are ;" and all to him seemed most proper and fitting. He was, as it were, on his native heath, and whether all was lit up, or whether the nakedness of the land was apparent in the daylight, it was one to him. It was a matter of business, and Crummles was honestly and sincerely a believer in himself, his art, and his family. "It was not very light, but Nicholas found himself close to the first entrance on the prompter's side, among bare walls, dusty scenes, mildewed clouds, heavily daubed draperies, and dirty floors. He looked about him ; ceiling, pit, boxes,

gallery, orchestra, fittings, and decorations of every kind—all looked coarse, cold, gloomy, and wretched.

“‘Is this a theatre?’ whispered Smike, in amazement, ‘I thought it was a blaze of light and finery.’

“‘Why, so it is,’ replied Nicholas, hardly less surprised; ‘but not by day, Smike.’”

Troupes of travelling actors seem to have disappeared, or at any rate to have altered entirely, since the days when Dickens wrote *Nickleby*. Then they seem to have travelled from town to town carrying scenery and adjuncts to the various stages they proposed to visit, and they contained within their company every constituent part for acting a play of Shakespeare, of Congreve, or Sheridan. Of course celebrated actors travel now, and they are supported by a few notables of local celebrity, who take some secondary part with more or less ability, and prevent the great principal from being swamped by very bad acting. In the Crummles’ troupe they seem to have enjoyed the privilege of conveying even supernumeraries about, so that there could be no chance of any accident through a member of the company being unequal to the occasion. The house where Mr. Crummles lived might almost be pointed out with certainty yet. It was in St. Thomas Street, at the abode of “one Bulph, a pilot, who sported a boat-green door, with window-frames of the same colour, and had the little finger of a drowned man on his parlour mantel-shelf, with other maritime and natural curiosities. He displayed also a brass knocker, a brass plate,

and a brass bell-handle, all very bright and shining ; and had a mast, with a vane on the top of it, in his back yard."

The lodgings that Nicholas secured for himself and Smike were on the Common Hard, which seems to be the name pertaining to a part of Portsmouth where the wharves are. What its origin may be I could not discover ; but the people there point out, in a narrow lane leading to the wharf, the house where Nicholas is supposed to have sojourned. It certainly is a modest dwelling, and somewhat dreary, but from the narrow street it is easy to see great forests of masts and yards that are harboured below. When Mr. Lenville and his friend Mr. Folair made an early call on Nicholas, they contrived, as he was not up, much to the astonishment of their new recruit, to beguile the time with a fencing bout on the small landing-place with their walking-sticks ; and they made use of many theatrical expressions, " to the unspeakable discomposure of all other lodgers downstairs."

One thing is noticeable in this work, and it illustrates a period in the age of copyright. When Nicholas joined the company, he was asked by the manager if he could write a play, or at any rate adapt a French play to his stage, and Nicholas replied affirmatively, and then worked away at the piece, which was speedily put into rehearsal ; and then worked away at his own part, which he studied with great perseverance, and acted, as the whole company said, to perfection. Then, as the story records, the bell-man went round, and posters appeared on all the walls,

and play-bills were distributed broadcast, etc. etc., as though to secure a rapid return for the modest outlay the play had cost. Perhaps it might be well here to remark that about two years before *Nickleby* was written the property in the copyright of a play was not secured. Our principal Encyclopædia says that in Shakespeare's time some of his audience used to take note-books and write down what they heard, which in some measure accounts for the doubtful and different readings we have. But at any rate the play Nicholas adapted was not safe for a single hour. All the security he had was in keeping the MS. in his trunk ; and at that time all the remuneration that playwrights could claim was the sum that the original employer gave, and any small amount that booksellers<sup>1</sup> gave for copyright, together with any sum that London managers might be disposed to give till the play was issued and the copyright secured. But Sir E. Bulwer brought in an Act in 1833 that secured twenty-eight years' copyright for a playwright, and this greatly delighted Dickens, who all through his life had a sincere admiration for the author of *Eugene Aram*.

The Brothers Cheeryble have often been identified with a London firm ; but however this may be, it is hardly likely that any firm would have risen to great wealth and prosperity who had such an easy routine of business as to let a youth like Nicholas, who never was in a merchant's

<sup>1</sup> In a bookseller or publisher's hands, of course, anything became copyright if he desired.

or banker's office before (and the Brothers Cheeryble seem to have combined both callings) suddenly see the great ledgers before him, and then without any hesitation "dip his pen into the inkstand before him, and plunge into the books of Cheeryble Brothers!" This has always seemed a great drawback to the work, and unhappily Dickens was illustrated by an artist who is not at all times worthy of the prominent position he was destined to fill as the illustrator of one to whom in all probability every Englishman is now in some degree indebted; and if we turn to page 356 of the first issue of *Nicholas Nickleby* we are introduced to the Brothers Cheeryble, who are linking arm in arm in their own office, and looking at Nicholas as he is trying his hand at book-keeping. They are grotesquely dressed in this drawing, and apparently inebriated. I write this to defend, as far as I can, the memory of Dickens from his illustrator, though indeed the latter has done good work, if somewhat grotesque, as the pages of 404, 500, and 518, in *Nicholas*, and many—very many others in other works can testify. A great responsibility lies at the door of an artist who illustrates an author. If his figures are vapid or inane, or, on the other hand, if they are vulgar, it tends to give a tone to all they say. Thackeray had the advantage of being very well illustrated. Sometimes, as in the *Virginians* and *Pendennis*, he was his own artist, and has left us pictures which have in them as much latent humour as the text itself, and sometimes he was well seconded by Doyle, as in the *Newcomes*.



The London scenes of Dickens are very able and suggestive. Mr. Forster says ; "There seemed to be not much to add to our knowledge of London until his books came upon us, but each, in this respect, outstripped the other in its marvels. In *Nickleby* the old city reappears under every aspect ; and whether warmth and light are playing over what is good and cheerful in it, or the veil is uplifted from its darker scenes, it is at all times our privilege to see and feel it as it absolutely is. Its interior hidden life becomes familiar as its commonest outward forms, and we discover that we hardly knew anything of the places we supposed that we knew the best."

Golden Square has already been alluded to. The "Crown Inn," which was the abode of Newman Noggs, still stands, though it has a new front. When Nicholas first arrived at Dotheboys Hall he found a letter he had forgotten, which Newman had put in his hand at the Saracen's Head, and there he found the invitation from Newman Noggs. "If ever you want a shelter in London (don't be angry at this, I once thought I never should), they know where I live, at the sign of the Crown in Silver Street, Golden Square. It is at the corner of Silver Street and James Street, with a bar door both ways. Once nobody was ashamed—never mind that. It's all over." In a *P.S.* he admits that days were different once with him. "If you should go near Barnard Castle, there is good ale at the King's Head. "Say you know me, and I am sure they will not charge you for it. You may say *Mr.* Noggs there,

for I was a gentleman then. I was indeed." Newman Noggs was an old client of Ralph Nickleby's, who had spent his patrimony in excessive living, and at one time, as Ralph said, he kept his horses and hounds. Degraded he may have become, but in some way he always had the feelings of a gentleman. When Sydney Smith invited Dickens, whose merits he was slow at first to perceive, to meet some friends at his house, he assured him that he might delineate their characters, and give them a place in any future number of his works; and he said, "Lady Charlotte in particular you may marry to Newman Noggs."

The office of the Cheeryble Brothers is not easily identified. "The City Square has no enclosure save the lamp-post in the middle, and no grass but the weeds that spring up around its base. It is a quiet, little-frequented, retired spot, favourable to melancholy and contemplation, and appointments of long waiting. In winter-time the snow lingers there long after it has melted from the busy streets and highways. The summer's sun holds it in some respect, and, while he darts his cheerful rays sparingly into the square, he keeps his fiery heat and glare for noisier and less-imposing precincts. It is so quiet that you can almost hear the ticking of your own watch when you stop to cool in its refreshing atmosphere." But how has London altered since this was written; the same page in *Nicholas* describes the London squares before railways had invaded the city precincts. "And let not those whose

eyes have been accustomed to the aristocratic gravity of Grosvenor Square and Hanover Square, the dowager barrenness and frigidity of Fitzroy Square, or the gravel walks of Russell or Euston, suppose that the affections of Tim Linkinwater had been kept alive by any association of leaves, however dingy, or grass, however bare and thin."

This was written before Euston had ever heard a railway whistle, and long before the most enthusiastic prophet could have predicted that the quiet square would become the busiest centre for passenger traffic in the world.

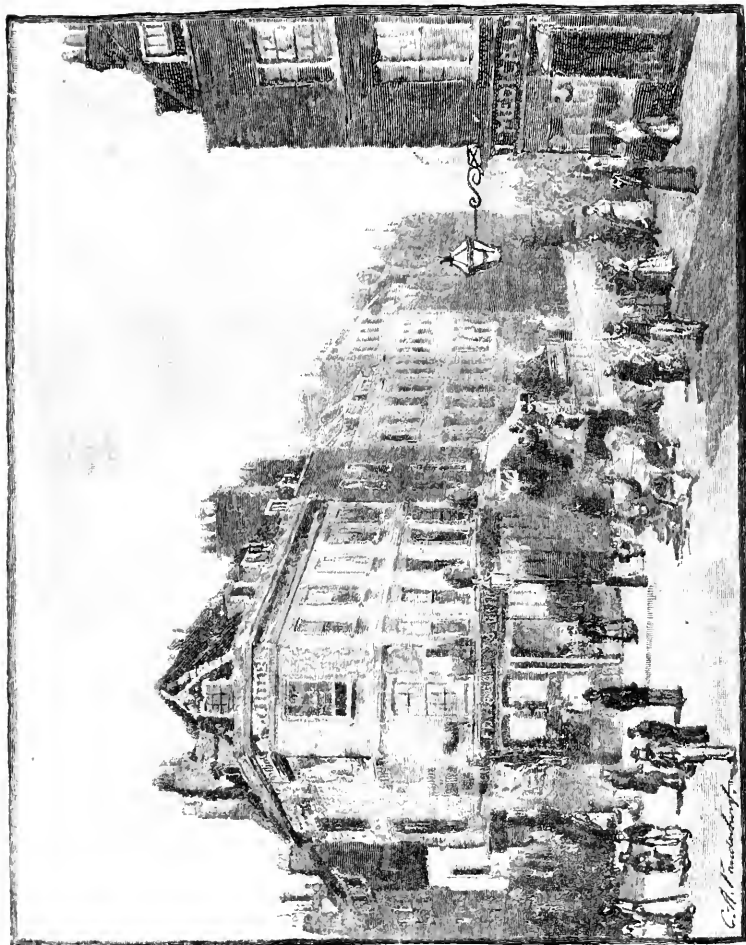
The house where Madame Mantalini lived was near Cavendish Square, and we have no difficulty in identifying it with Wigmore Street, which crosses Welbeck Street and Duke Street at right angles, and connects Cavendish with Portman Square; and in this street we may now see such establishments as Mantalini's with a "liveried footman and spacious hall." The shop to the house where the Mantalinis dwelt was let off to an importer of otto of roses. "Madame Mantalini's show-rooms were on the first floor; a fact that was notified to the nobility and gentry by the casual exhibition, near the handsomely curtained windows, of two or three elegant bonnets of the newest fashion, and some costly garments in the most approved taste." And then Dickens, whose eye seems to have missed nothing either indoors or out-of-doors, gives a wonderful description of first-class show-rooms, when the modiste led Kate and Ralph Nickleby into the saloon, "which comprised two spacious drawing-rooms, and

exhibited an immense variety of superb dresses and materials for dresses ; some arranged in stands, others laid carelessly on sofas, and others, again, scattered over the carpet, hanging upon the cheval glasses, or mingling in some other way with the rich furniture of various descriptions which was profusely displayed." Ralph was well known to at any rate Mr. Mantalini if not to his wife, for he had not unfrequently discounted long-dated paper of customers to the establishment, whose names were good enough but whose promise to pay lay at such a distance of time that the ordinary banking world were debarred by their rules from advancing money upon it. Mantalini is drawn from the life, and, indeed, if we refer to the records of one London Court, that deals especially with domestic trouble, we shall have no difficulty in soon finding his counterpart. His name was originally "Muntle," but it had easily been converted into Mantalini, as his wife, to whom he had only been married six months when Kate Nickleby first made her appearance at the establishment, thought that an English-sounding name would injure the establishment. He was not, by any means, *all* bad ; there are men who marry for money that are a hundred times worse, and he was amusing and fantastic. In some respects he may remind us of Lucio, in *Measure for Measure* ; and indeed he is Lucio treated according to the formulas of what is termed the æsthetic school. "He had married on his whiskers, upon which property he had previously subsisted in a genteel manner

for some years, and which he had recently improved, after patient cultivation, by the addition of a moustache, which promised to secure him an easy independence ; his share in the labours of the business being at present confined to spending the money, and occasionally, when that ran short, of driving to Mr. Ralph Nickleby to procure discount, at a percentage, for customers' bills."

Kate lived with her mother in a miserable house in Thames Street, of which the description that is given is so vivid, and it so exactly describes an enormous number of London houses, that it must be reproduced. The house had been benevolently placed at the disposal of Mrs. Nickleby and her daughter by Ralph Nickleby, into whose possession it had obviously come as some collateral security for a loan. The distance which Kate had to traverse each day to her work, from Wigmore Street to Thames Street was two miles and a half ; and the description of the house as it was when Newman Noggs first took her and her mother to it in a cab, is in the eleventh chapter. " They went into the City, turning down by the river side ; and after a long and very slow drive, the streets being crowded at that hour with vehicles of every kind, stopped in front of a large old dingy house in Thames Street, the door and windows of which were so bespattered with mud that it would have appeared to have been uninhabited for years. The door of this deserted mansion Newman opened with a key which he took from his hat, in which, by - the - by, in consequence of the

dilapidated state of his pockets, he deposited everything, and would most likely have carried his money if he had had any—and the coach being discharged, he led the way into the interior of the mansion. Old and black and gloomy in truth it was, and sullen and dark were the rooms, once so bustling with life and enterprise. There was a wharf behind, opening on the Thames; an empty dog-kennel, some bones of animals, fragments of iron hoops, and staves of old casks, lay strewn about, but no life was stirring there. It was a picture of cold silent decay.” Newman Noggs had thoughtfully, and who knows by what possible means! succeeded in procuring some furniture for Mrs. Nickleby and her daughter, and he appears in this part of the book to his best advantage. Newman Noggs belonged to a type that was much more common half a century ago than it is at present. He was born with advantages, and lived the life of a country gentleman; but the habits of Englishmen were commonly more lax than they are now, and he expended his patri-mony in excesses.



SEVEN DIALS.

C. H. F. M. S. 1874





## CHAPTER IV.

## OLIVER TWIST.

WHEN Dickens wrote *Oliver Twist* he desired, as he says, to paint vice in its true characters, without the fascinations of highway adventure, or snug robbers' caves, or anything approaching the attractions that too often pervaded the literature of profligacy. He wished to answer those who

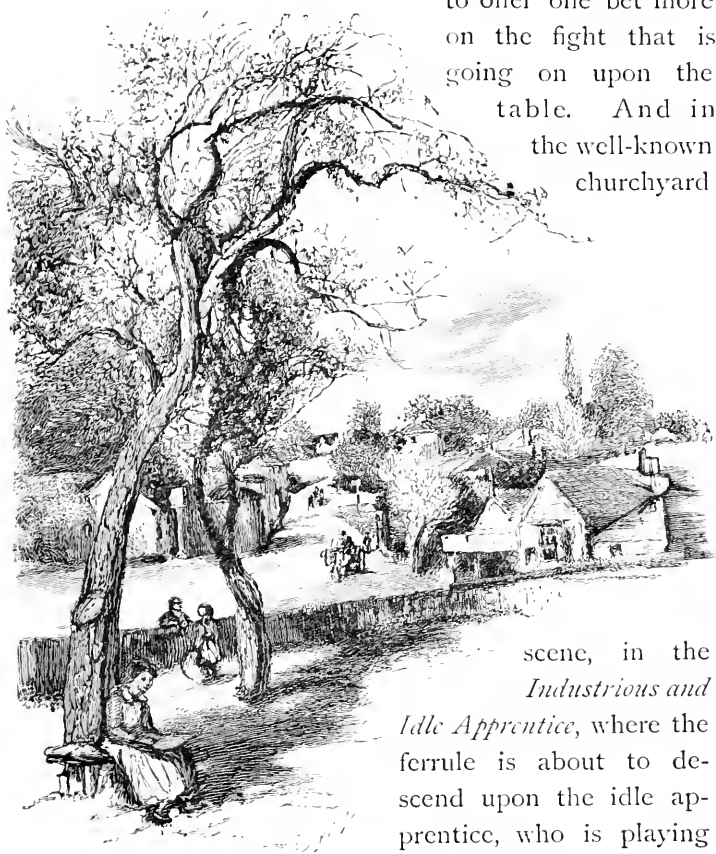
Proved, by cool discriminating sight,  
Black's not so black, nor white so very white.

The dens and stews of London are painted from life, and the picture is not inviting. In the character of Nancy there is some redeeming quality—she might have been different under different circumstances; in the characters of Fagin or Bill Sikes there is none; they are simply bad, as bad as they can be, without one silver thread lining the edge of the cloud. Unfortunately for the artist, but fortunately for the rest of the world, the haunts of vice that were standing when this work was written are demolished; and whatever remains of the Bill Sikes or the Fagin element is left in the cold; but if we read the police summaries we are sadly reminded that they

are hardly extinct. "Whether every gentler feeling is dead within such bosoms, or the proper chord to strike has rusted and is hard to find, I cannot say; but there are such men as Sikes who, being closely followed through the same space of time, and through the same current of circumstances, would not give, by one look or action of a moment, the faintest indication of a better nature." Dickens further asks, "What manner of life is it that is described in these pages as the every-day existence of a thief? what charms has it for the young and ill-disposed? what allurements for the most jolter-headed of juveniles?"

In *Oliver Twist*, in fact, vice is treated as Hogarth treated it; "in whose works," Dickens says, "the times in which he lived, and the characters of every time, will never cease to be reflected with a power and depth of thought which belonged to few men before him, and will probably appertain to fewer still in time to come." "Cervantes laughed Spain's chivalry away by showing Spain its impossible and wild absurdity. It was my attempt, in my humble and far-distant sphere, to dim the false glitter surrounding something which really did exist, by showing it in its unattractive and repulsive truth." Much more like Hogarth than Cervantes, Dickens has left a name that will probably endure as long as either of theirs. The shadow of the man in the "cockpit," by Hogarth, who is suspended from the ceiling, according to the etiquette of such places, for not paying his bets, is

represented as holding out his watch, desperately resolved to offer one bet more on the fight that is going on upon the table. And in the well-known churchyard



BARNET.

scene, in the *Industrious and Idle Apprentice*, where the ferrule is about to descend upon the idle apprentice, who is playing pitch and toss on a gravestone, the hand of the beadle is arrested by the interest he takes in the result of

the toss. Touches of humour like these, which sparkle all through the pictures of Hogarth, enliven even his grim scenes, and are much in the vein of Dickens.

As for the exact locality of the town where Oliver first saw the light, and Bumble immortalised beadledom, there is some little difficulty in the way. In the eighth chapter we read that after Oliver had fled from the tyranny of his oppressors he found himself, after the seventh morning, "limping slowly into the little town of Barnet." It is, as Mr. Dickens says in his admirable *Guide to London*, "a pretty and still tolerably rural suburb, but on the north side of London, and on the clay. Perhaps the best situation on that side, and standing high, its full name being, in fact, High Barnet. Locally it is considered the highest ground between York and London." It is hardly necessary to add that Mr. Charles Dickens, who wrote it, is the son of the great novelist; and here I may venture to clear up, what is sometimes alluded to as an inconsistency, namely, why Mr. Dawkins, the "artful dodger," had gone so far as the Barnet road to meet Oliver, for whom he was not supposed to have been looking. But the plot is cut rather abruptly short in several parts, or else it is certain that the "This is him, Fagin," from the artful dodger, "my friend, Oliver Twist," would have been shown to point out that Oliver had been looked for by Monks, and he had taken Fagin into his schemes. Monks was, indeed, not exactly known as a regular frequenter of the den. "He goes by

some other name among us then," said Nancy to Miss Maylie. But to return to Oliver.

After he had left his native town for some five miles he saw a milestone on the road-side "which bore in large characters an intimation that it was just seventy miles from that spot to London." By that showing we should find ourselves, if we continued the road, in the quiet ancient city of Peterborough, and though Market Harborough might be reached at the end of the same mileage, the description of the town or city where the immortal Bumble reigned coincides more particularly with Peterborough.

One is disposed to be a little surprised in the first part of *Oliver Twist* being taken up with such a subject; but it was the humour of Dickens to indicate some notable being or character, that had in their turn filled a place in Bumbledom, and that, in fact, coincides with all who ever in any station in life spoke the English language, or perhaps, if we could know it, any other. There are Bumbles in Royalty, and there are Bumbles in the footmen at Brighton who asked Weller to the "swarry," and at first treated him very superciliously, but soon found they had reckoned without their host.

It may be well to remark here that the cause of Oliver's going away was the cruelty of the master he was bound to as an apprentice from the work-house. The magistrate's room would accord well with that in the town indicated at that time, and the picture of the chimney-

sweeper who saw a premium of five pounds for an apprentice is all in keeping with the time in which *Oliver Twist* was written. Mr. Gamfield, chimney-sweeper, jumped at the idea of having to handle such a sum, and only the magistrate's veto, the magistrate before whom Oliver was taken to sign the indenture, prevented his being handed over to the chimney-sweeper.

It may be necessary to remind the present generation that very small slim boys were apprenticed in early life to sweep the great broad chimney flues which prevailed before the glazed socket pipes carried away the heat and smoke ; and here again Dickens appears as a reformer.

It used to be the custom in England.—I cannot say how far it was on the Continent—to send these boys up chimneys with a sweeping-brush, and they were enlisted for the service as best they could be. Their duties were to climb up by the projecting bricks, and their heads were covered with a loosely woven cloth, to prevent them from being choked, and when a chimney flue diverged, and the soot had accumulated, the place was not only narrow, but uncertain, black, and cavernous. In this service Mr. Gamfield wanted Oliver ; but he was disappointed. A tale used to be told, and was generally believed, of a young boy being kidnapped in Liverpool by some chimney sweeps, and compelled to serve under threats. For five years he was lost, and proved to be the heir to a property at the north end of the town, which had increased enormously in value.

Those who may wish to revisit the haunts of Fagin and his promising school of apprentices at Snow Hill and Field Lane will be doomed to disappointment, as the Holborn Viaduct has cleared them away ; but in a word they may be described as nests for stolen goods ; there were plenty of shops, and those shops were what would be called in America "open stores." There was not a window, glass was rather too costly, but there was a fall shutter, and though in summer this was perhaps even an advantage, in winter the inhabitants were to be seen in the back part of the shop with their hands in their pockets conversing over a charcoal stove. But it is really a fact that in the most open form pocket-handkerchiefs were exposed for sale, and that when gentlemen used nothing but bandanas which cost from 7s. 6d. to 10s. each. This will at once explain to modern readers the singular scenes of "sorting the wipes," etc., that occur in the first part of *Oliver Twist*, and hanging them to dry on a "clothes-horse," after the stitches that marked them had been picked out.

Oliver and "the artful" "crossed from Angel to St. John's Road, struck down the small street that leads to Sadler's Wells Theatre, through Exmouth Street and Coppice Row, down the little court by the side of the Workhouse, across the classic ground which once bore the name of Hockley-in-the-Hole, then into Little Saffron-Hill, and so into Saffron-Hill the Great, along which the Dodger scudded at a rapid pace." He had, it would seem, some coquettish objections to showing himself in London before

night, and so it was nearly eleven before they commenced their town journey. The Angel still stands, and is the stopping-place of the "Favourite" omnibuses, and St. John's Road, but is somewhat altered, and Sadler's Wells Theatre yet remains. This was called originally after a man named Sadler, who discovered a chalybeate spring in the seventeenth century, which spring was remarkable as possessing the same qualities as Tunbridge Wells. Royalty resorted there; a theatre, which often is mentioned by Dickens, was built, and which has numbered among its managers, Howard Payne, Dibdin the poet, Phelps the tragedian, and the well-known Grimaldi the clown, and was afterwards under the conduct of less notable directors.

Sadler's Wells Theatre was reopened long after Dickens's time; indeed, within the last two years, a London paper, commenting on the event, says—"The Duchess of Sutherland will be present at the opening of the old theatre at Sadler's Wells, and literary London will be there, not so much for the sake of the musical play 'Rob Roy' which is a little old-fashioned, but because it is an event of the highest interest in theatrical annals." The locality, as it then presented itself, is well described by Dickens. "The streets were narrow and muddy, and the air was impregnated with filthy odours. There were a good many small shops, but their only stock in trade appeared to be the heaps of children who, even at that time of night, were crawling in and out of the doors, or screaming from the inside.



“The sole places that seemed to prosper amid the general blight of the place were the public-houses, and in them the lowest orders of Irish were wrangling with might and main. Covered ways and yards, which here and there diverged from the main street, disclosed little knots of houses where drunken men and women were positively wallowing in filth, and from several of these doorways great ill-looking fellows were cautiously emerging, bound, to all appearance, upon no well-disposed or harmless errand.” Before Oliver could escape from scenes of such horror, his companion pushed him into the house they had been journeying to, and after some pass-word they mounted rickety stairs to the room of the now world-renowned Fagin. Why Dickens should have made him a Jew is not apparent, for Jews are, as a rule, among the most law-abiding of subjects in any land; but it is said that he was a real portrait—still he is not a representative character. Men bred and born in London, or Birmingham, or Liverpool—Gentiles, let us say, of no very defined creed, could much more easily be found to fill the character—but that is a small matter: the abode is no “robbers’ cave,” but a den of thieves. Fagin was before a fire, and “in a frying-pan which was on the fire, and which was secured to the mantelpiece by a string, some sausages were cooking.” A toasting-fork was in his hand; he was a “very old shrivelled Jew, whose villainous-looking and repulsive face was obscured by a quantity of matted red hair.” To poor Oliver the prospect of something like a savoury

supper, and a warm room to sleep in after his weary bruised feet had brought him so far, one might think there was a sense of relief, but even here no avenue is left for looking at his so far improved prospects with anything but aversion. "The walls and ceiling of the room were perfectly black with dirt and age. There was a deal table before the fire, upon which was a candle stuck in a ginger-beer bottle ; two or three pewter-pots, a loaf and butter and a plate ; several rough beds made of old sacks were huddled side by side on the floor ; and seated round the table were four or five boys, none older than the Dodger, smoking long clay pipes, and drinking spirits with all the air of middle-aged men." When Oliver, in the "height or the depth of his simplicity, accompanied the 'Dodger' and Charley Bates on one of their pilfering expeditions for the first time, he noticed with surprise that the Dodger had a propensity for pulling off the caps of small boys and throwing them in areas, and Charley Bates, with even less respect for property and its rights, used to purloin onions and apples nimbly from stalls, and drop them in his capacious pockets."

But the Dodger's appearance became suddenly altered and more business-like "as they emerged from a narrow square in Clerkenwell, which is called, by some strange perversion of terms, 'the Green'"—this is a short way to the north of Farringdon Street Station, and remains very much as it was when Dickens saw it. Clerkenwell has not altered to any great extent. In this part of London

there used at one time to be a great number of wells fed by springs. One of these was marked by an inscription on a pump at the corner of Ray Street, and was interesting as the Clerks' Well, "*Fons clericorum*," that gave the name to Clerkenwell, which Stow says "took its name from the parish clerks of London, who of old were accustomed then yearly to assemble, and to play some large history of Holy Scripture." This partly corresponds with the Chester mystery plays that took place in that city every Easter, and were grotesque representations of sacred scenes.

The Sessions House at Clerkenwell yet stands, and charges are heard in it from 10 to 5 every day. It was to this building that Bumble was bound when he said to Mrs. Mann that a "legal action was coming on about a settlement, and the Board has appointed me—me, Mrs. Mann—to depose to the matter before the Quarter Sessions; and I very much question whether the Clerkenwell Sessions will not find themselves in the wrong box before they have done with me."

The house where the Jew lived was like other houses in some of the lower parts of London; and when Oliver was permitted to wander about in it he saw panelled rooms with high mantel-pieces and ornamental ceilings, and he concluded that before the Jew was born it had belonged to better people, and been quite gay and handsome. The loneliness of the boy in the dark deserted mansion is well told, and he did not leave it till he was

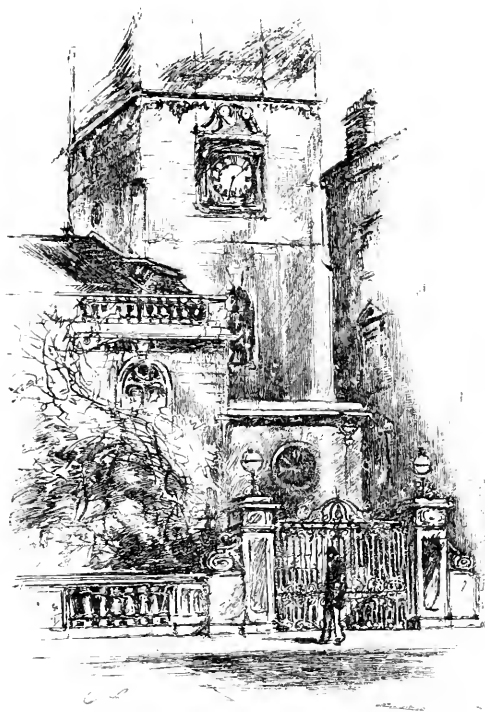
taken away to assist Sikes in the ill-starred expedition to Chertsey, which led to Oliver's final escape from his cruel captivity.

The local descriptions here are literally crowded together, from the clock of St. Andrew's to the final destination at Chertsey. One of the most accurate descriptions of Smithfield Old Market is to be found in *Oliver Twist*. It was abolished in 1852, and I can well remember as a boy being taken to see it at the early hour in the morning when Dickens described it, and the barbarous scene it presented is in no way overdrawn. "It was on a market morning. The ground was covered nearly ankle-deep with filth and mire;" and as for a Bill Sikes in the crowd, there was not one but a hundred; nay, in some parts of the market square, where the lights were burning inside a corner public-house, the crowd appeared to consist of little else, and it seemed to me at one time that the only living creatures with any pretension to respectability of character were the cattle. In the twenty-first chapter of Book I. this is admirably described, and evidently the account was written on the spot.

In singular contrast to this scene is the house-breaking expedition to Chertsey, where the robber took Oliver to assist in the burglary by putting him through a pane in the window to open the front door, and a house is still pointed out as being the scene of the attempted theft.

The church of St. Andrew's is here, and Sikes remarked to Oliver as they passed the clock, "Now, then,

young 'un, it's hard upon seven! You must step out. Come, don't lag behind already, lazy-legs.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.

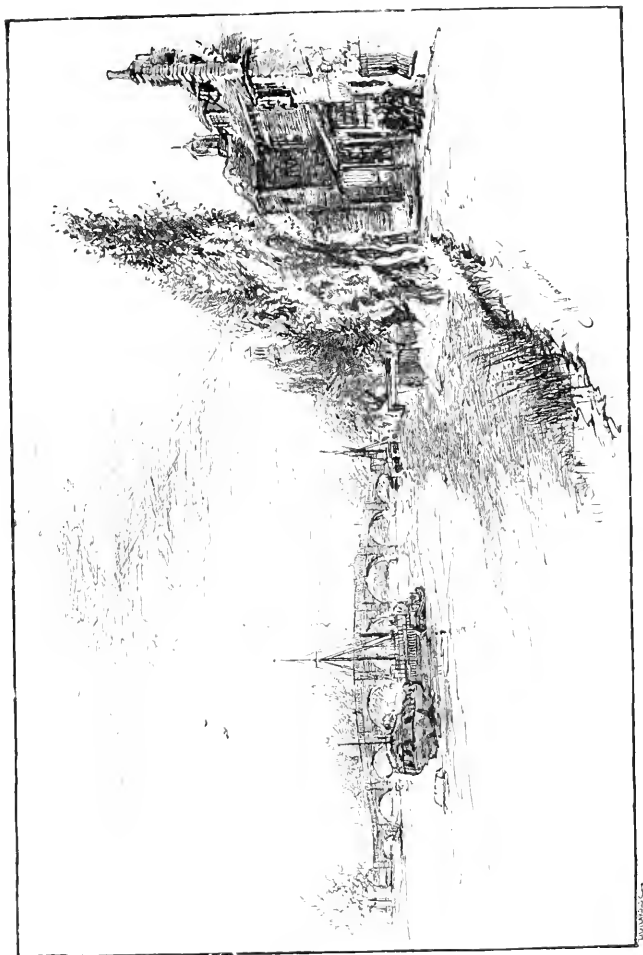
They went past Hyde Park corner, and through Kensington to the Hammersmith and Brentford road; but as Mr. Sikes saw "Hounslow" painted on a cart he asked the driver, with such civility as he could assume, if he

would give them a lift as far as Isleworth ; and here all the road brings up to the recollection scenes of beauty and delight, though it is but little of these that poor Oliver could enjoy.

Isleworth, through which they went, is one of the places from which Covent Garden, so often mentioned in Dickens, draws its supplies. The county is perfectly charming round here, and Sion House, built by the "Lord Protector Somerset," and now a residence of the Duke of Northumberland, is remembered with pleasure by every one who has sailed up the Thames. Hammersmith almost joins Kensington, and Chiswick, through which Oliver passed, is nearly now swallowed up in the advancing tide of city extension. Still there are some few rural features left, and here lies buried Hogarth, who in pencil did precisely what Dickens did by pen. Nay, the epitaph on his tomb might, with little alteration, be used on that of Dickens :—

"Farewell, great painter of mankind,  
Who reached the noblest point of art :  
Whose pictured morals charm the mind,  
And through the eye correct the heart.  
If genius fire thee, reader, stay :  
If nature touch thee, drop a tear :  
If neither move thee, turn away,  
'Tis Hogarth's honoured dust lies here."

"Kew Bridge was passed," the narrative adds, "and yet they kept on as steadily as if they had only begun their journey." The bridge is accurately enough shown



KEW BRIDGE.





on the wood-cut, and the precision of Dickens's descriptions in all this expedition are very remarkable. This New Bridge was built by Robert Tunstall in the year 1789, and it replaced one that was built by his father in 1759. The earlier bridge was entirely of wood. There is a pleasant rustic air about it, and, as may be seen, London improvements have not as yet swept away its sunny surroundings.

Brentford was reached at last, and, though it is not a town that offers many attractions to a traveller, it doubtless was classic ground to Sikes as the seat of the great distilleries of Sir Felix Booth, where the celebrated "Old Tom" is made. Beyond Brentford Sikes and Oliver, who little knew the fell purpose for which he was required, went into a public-house, of which more than one would answer the description, and had some dinner among a rather rough lot of farmers, one of whom was going in his cart to Lower Halliford. This is on the left bank of the Thames between Walton and Shepperton, and it is a perfect paradise for roach anglers. Oatlands Park and the Surrey hills are charmingly seen from here, but they would not interest the felon and his victim even if there had been light or time to see them.

The description of the ride in the cart is finely told. The night was dark and dreary, and the man had grown sleepy, while Sikes was in no mood for conversation, and Oliver sat huddled in the corner of the cart in fear and apprehension. "As they passed Sunbury Church the

clock struck seven. There was a light in the puny house opposite that streamed across the road, and threw into more sombre shadow a dark yew-tree with graves beneath it. There was a dull sound of falling water not far off, and the leaves of the old tree stirred gently in the night wind." The church of Sunbury, when this was written, was not the Byzantine chapel that we see now, but an edifice built in George II.'s time. The rendezvous was finally reached, and the burglary attempted. The house where this took place stands in a lonely situation near Penton Hook, and is pointed out by any of the inhabitants. It is quite worth a visit, and it is most suggestive of such a midnight excursion as that which took Sikes there.

In a very popular work on Dickens that has been published and written in America a tale is told that is not exactly an accurate account of the way in which *Oliver Twist* first suggested itself to Dickens. It is said that Dickens called on George Cruickshanks and waited while he finished an etching—that he turned over a book of etchings and found Fagin in the condemned cell, and then assured Cruickshanks that he was disposed to alter the plan of his work from the original. He had intended to bring *Oliver Twist* through adventures in the country, but seeing the life of a thief so strikingly illustrated Cruickshank consented to let him use the designs as he best thought fit, and hence Fagin, Sikes, and Nancy were created. But Dickens, as has been said, conceived the idea from an antagonistic feeling to the Poor Law Act of

1834, in which he differed so seriously from Miss Martineau. The more ancient Poor Laws of England, if indeed they can be called Poor Laws at all, we read with astonishment now; they were more savage than any in Europe, and, in fact, by them any person seeking for employment out of his own parish was to be whipped on the first offence, sold as a slave for the second, and hanged for the third. This was the feudal system with a vengeance. Of course it was not to last; but a very able writer in the *Edinburgh Review* says that "When a man was paid eight shillings by the overseer for standing six days in the pound—when he was put up to auction and received threepence a-day from his employer, and one shilling and ninepence a-day from his parish—when he was billeted on a farmer, who was required to pay him two shillings and sixpence a-week if single, four shillings if married without children, and eighteenpence more a-head if he had children—these payments were not wages. Such, however, in the beginning of 1834, was the condition of the labouring population in many thousand English parishes."

Now it is true that much which Dickens speaks of has passed away, but Bumble will never pass away; and the scene between him and Mrs. Bumble—Mrs. Corney that was—is a perfect example of a character sketch. He would have been in youth one of those cowardly boys that torment lesser ones and are abject towards their superiors, and it takes even Dickens to light up the character with humour. Mrs. Mann, who farms the children, fully appre-

ciated him when she "officially deposited his cocked hat and cane on the table before him," at which he "glanced complacently."

But almost the finest scene in Dickens's writings is in the fourteenth chapter of the second book. Bumble was master of the workhouse, and the gorgeous paraphernalia had descended to another beadle; and, what was of more importance, he had made Mrs. Corney Mrs. Bumble. His social position was improved as master of the workhouse, and even his pecuniary position, but "the laced coat and the cocked hat, where were they?" He was in plain dress, and the "mighty cocked hat was replaced by a modest round one." Nothing could replace that loss.

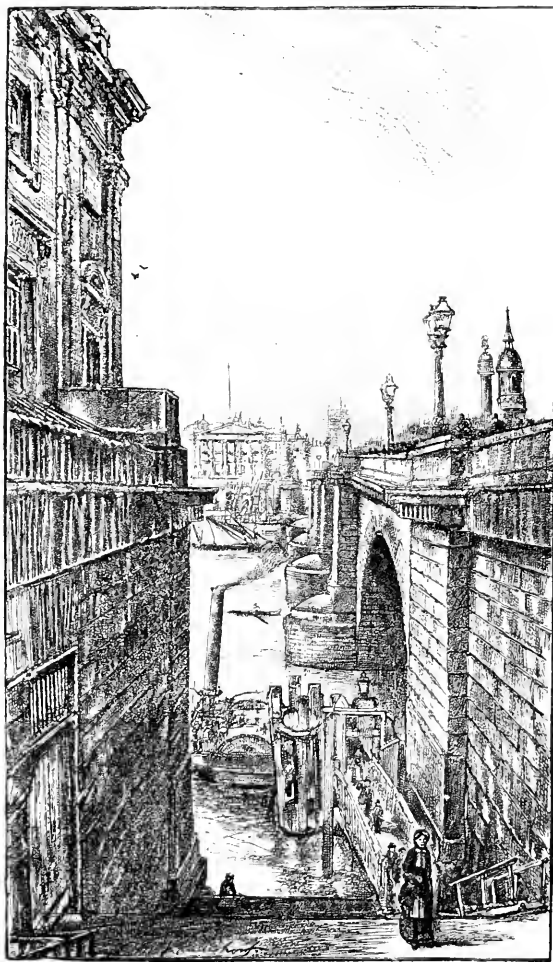
"'And to-morrow two months it was done,' sighed Bumble, 'it seems an age.'

"'I sold myself for six teaspoons, a pair of sugar-tongs, and a milk-pot, with a small quantity of second-hand furniter, and twenty pound in ready money—I went very reasonable cheap.'

"'Cheap!' cried a shrill voice in Mr. Bumble's ear, 'you would have been dear at any price, and dear enough I paid for you, the Lord above knows that.'"

Then the scene changes with quite dramatic swiftness. The "eye" which Bumble invited her to look at, and which had so often cowed a pauper, was lost upon the widow of Mr. Corney, and the matron "even raised a laugh that sounded as though it were genuine."

How she afterwards tried tears, at which Bumble was



LONDON BRIDGE.

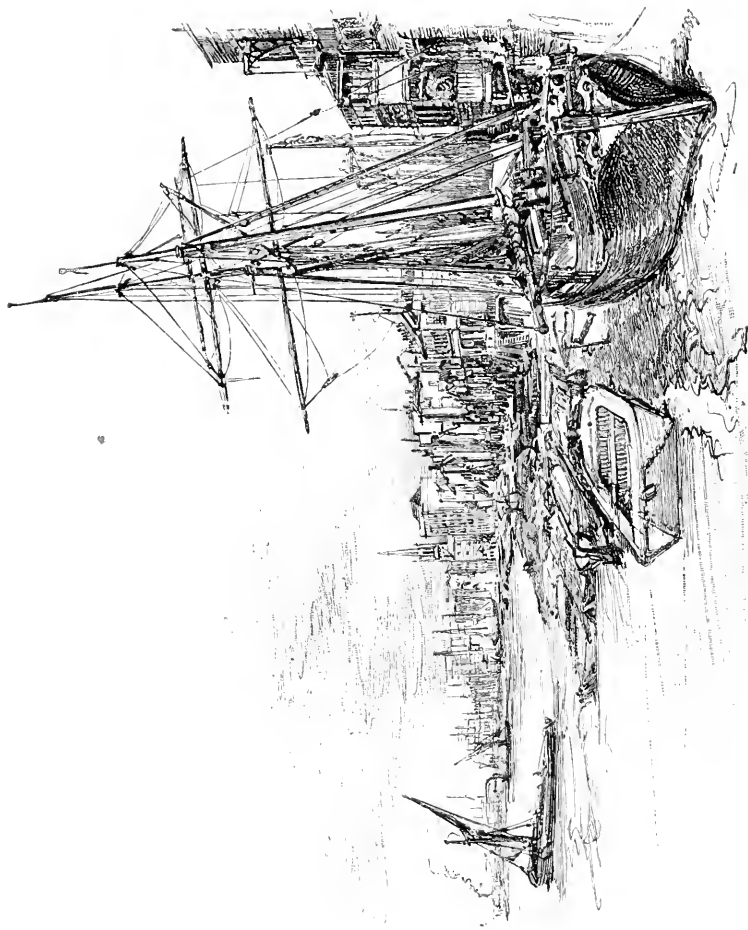


delighted, as being accustomed to them and showing his own power; and how when he got up to leave the room in a jaunty way and in triumph, but how so skilful a general as the late Mrs. Corney was not to be defeated so easily; how he heard a hollow sound, that betokened his hat being suddenly knocked off, and, after the slightest of skirmishes, the late Mrs. Corney was not only matron but master of the "Union," are matters of history.

After the girl Nancy had captured Oliver in his flight, and brought him back to his cruel bondage, she seems to have been struck with some remorse, and in the end, after he had finally escaped, she met Mr. Brownlow and Miss Maylie on London Bridge, which is picturesquely described in Dickens. She asked Rose Maylie to go to the steps at the farther end of the bridge that she might speak to her alone. "The steps to which the girl pointed were those which are on the Surrey bank and on the same side of the bridge as St. Saviour's Church form a landing-stair from the river," and here she told the tale of Monks that enabled Oliver to regain his rights. Here also, on these steps, the miserable Claypole waylaid her, and listened to the conversation that he afterwards reported to Fagin and Sikes, which led to the murder of poor Nancy, and, as is said, was the worst of all the bad deeds that "had been committed in London's bounds since night hung over it." And here we may notice how a murderer, as described by Shakspeare, corresponds with one drawn by our author. Macbeth was, in many respects, even more despicable than

Sikes, for he was a coward, and had all the ills that go with one. "Infirm of purpose," "to let I dare not wait upon I would," give us a glimpse of the character of Macbeth. Sikes had at any rate nothing of this—better it would have been if he had, but after their crimes the same uncertainty took hold of both. Sikes went up Islington to Highgate, and arrived finally at Hendon, where he stopped to get meat and drink, sometimes loitering, sometimes running, wandering miles, and retracing his steps, till he reached Hatfield, where the noble old palace stands that once sheltered Elizabeth. Here he went to another public-house, and left it abruptly, and so on. In this we notice the irresolution of Macbeth at the last,—putting on his armour and taking it off again, speaking in half sentences to every one, knowing he is more than suspected, and only consecutive when he communes with himself. "My way of life is worn into the sear and yellow leaf." But Sikes reaches Rotherhithe at last, a dreary locality down the Thames. The church which is here shown contains a monument to Prince Lee Boo, the amiable son of the King of Pelew Islands, who treated the shipwrecked crew of the *Antelope* with great kindness after they were wrecked in 1783. It is a wretched locality; we can always see filthy unemployed labourers here, and men, too, who do not look as if they wished to be employed either; dismantled walls, chimneys that seem as if they were hesitating whether to fall or not, and in wet weather so much mud that an American Indian could take his canoe





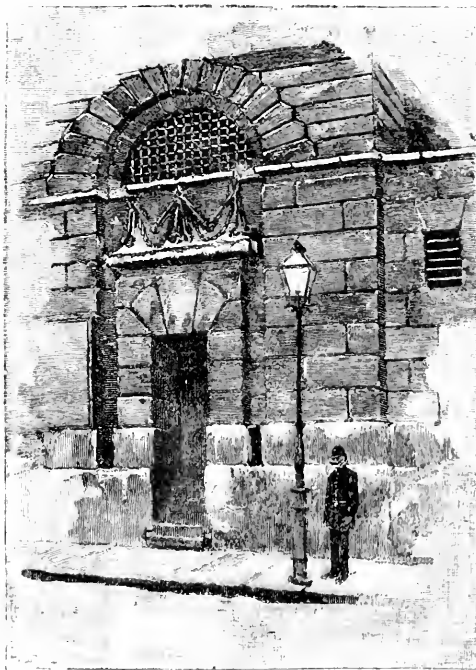
ROTHERHITHE.



along the streets without difficulty, at least if not poisoned in the attempt. It was to this locality that Sikes betook himself finally ; some old friends were here, but they were shy of him, and he presented only a ghost of his former appearance as he entered the tumble-down old mansion they had occupied, and the cry of, ‘ In the King’s name,” showed that justice had reached him at last, until he made a desperate effort to escape, and in doing so terminated his own evil existence.

The death of Fagin by the hand of the law finished the book, for the episode of Rose Fleming and Harry Maylie is only introduced to liven the gloomy tale. The last night of the Jew introduces us to the interior of the Old Bailey prison, of which the entrance is shown. The architect was George Dance, who also designed other public buildings in London, such as the Mansion House and the Guildhall, and may be said *not* to have left a name known to fame. The gate shown here, however, is fairly good for a prison gate. The fetters, Dickens says in one of his works, he used to believe were real ones, ready to be taken down at a moment’s notice to manacle some new prisoner ; and in his childish days he almost expected to see a brass plate on a door with “ Mr. Ketch ” on it. The most powerful pictures he has ever drawn are in *Oliver Twist*, where the Jew, taken from his haunts, and having his evil actions brought to light, seemed to be surrounded by a firmament all bright with gleaming eyes, and as his eye wandered to the gallery of the court he

could see people rising above each other to get a sight of his face ; in the same way he turned his eyes towards the Judge, and wondered at the fashion of his dress, and



OLD BAILEY PRISON.

saw a stout old gentleman on the bench who returned after a half-hour's absence, and wondered if he had been for his dinner, and where he had been for it, and so pursued some train of idle thought until a fresh object caught

his eye. There can be no doubt that this is a true description of what a man generally feels when being tried on a capital charge. It has fallen to my lot to see several such trials, and, as far as the expression of countenance was an indication, the prisoner was in a state of abstraction, all was turning out so differently from what he had expected, and the slightest irrelevant incident was noticed as a relief.

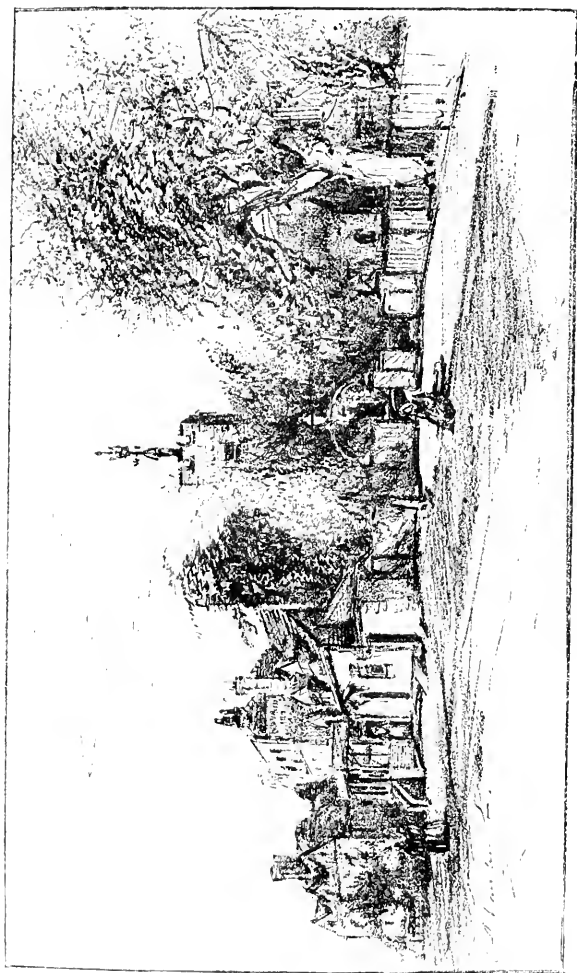
Dickens has left a description of internal economy of the Newgate of that time in another of his works, and an allusion to it may serve to explain some of his scenes, for it differs entirely from anything we see now. Formerly criminals were taken from Newgate to Tyburn for execution, and a nosegay was presented to every prisoner on his way there. Publicans, it is said, used almost to emulate each other for the honour of presenting them with the parting cup. They were considered heroes by the crowd who followed, and hoped they would, in the horrible language of the day, "die game." Yet even here we can see some ray of better things. Perhaps this was in some way a protest against the criminal laws of England, that even in the present century were the most cruel and senseless in Europe. We can scarcely believe that Dickens's one is of our own generation, and a man whom most of us may have seen, when we read the following in *Sketches by Boz*, "where he describes the press-room, day-room, and cells at Newgate, and the apartments about them, in one of which were five and twenty or thirty prisoners, all under sentence of death, awaiting the Recorder's report, men of

all ages and appearances, from a hardened old offender with swarthy face and grizzly beard of three days' growth, to a handsome boy not fourteen years old, and of singularly youthful appearance even for that age, who had been condemned for burglary." May this have suggested Oliver's expedition with Sikes? for he was liable to death, and if the Chertsey people were of what was called "consideration," and the old lady had been laid up in consequence of the attack on the house, the "Recorder's report," might fairly have been looked to with apprehension. One is sadly reminded of Burns' pathetic lines—

"Mankind is unco' weak,  
And little to be trusted,  
If self the wavering balance shake  
It's rarely right adjusted."

In another room Dickens saw three men, of whom the fate of two was sealed, as the turnkey whispered to him, "they are dead men," but the third, entertaining some hope of escape, lounged by a window as far away from the others as possible, who were not very visible, one, with his head on his arm, covered over the fire, and the other was "leaning on the sill of the farthest window."

Opposite Newgate is St. Sepulchre's Church, where the tolling bell announces the last dread act of the law; and here at one time the ringer of St. Sepulchre's used to ring a hand bell under Newgate, and admonish those who in the condemned cells could readily hear him reciting some verses at midnight, of which the last two lines ran—



HENDON CHURCHYARD.





“And when St. Sepulchre’s bell to-morrow tolls,  
The Lord above have mercy on your souls.”

After the terrible murder of Nancy Bill Sikes fled into the country, but all his efforts to escape from himself were in vain. Horace’s apothegm is as true now as it was when he wrote it, and it will be true for ever:—

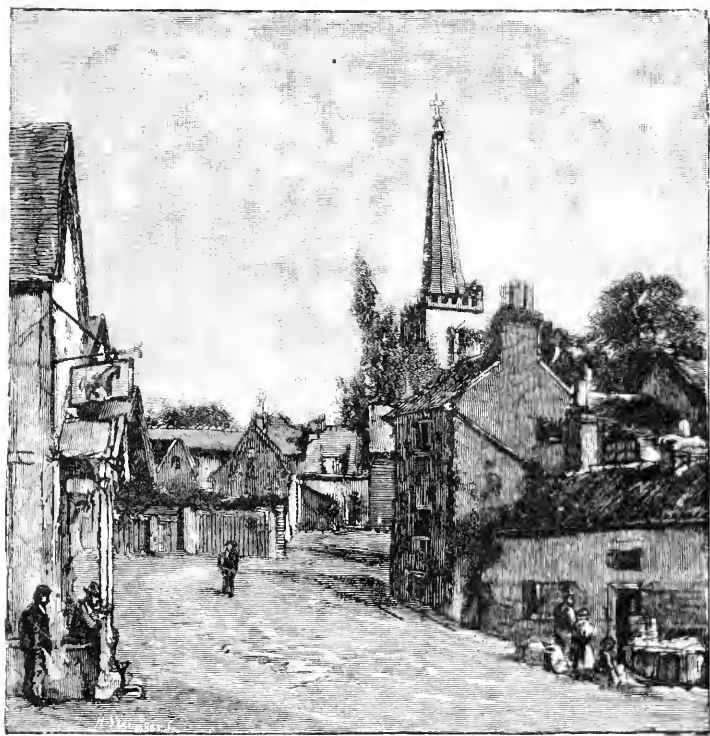
“*Patriæ quis exul, se quoque fugit.*”

After he had wandered without any apparent purpose, in the first roads that he hit upon, unsteady of purpose and all uncertain where to go, he skirted Lord Mansfield’s Park at Caen Wood, and came out on Hampstead Heath, and at last lay down to sleep under some bushes on the Heath, and slept. But slumber did not hold him long. “Where could he go to that was near and not too public to get some meat and drink? Hendon. That was a good place, not far off and out of most people’s way. Thither he directed his steps—running sometimes, and sometimes with a strange perversity loitering at a snail’s pace, or stopping altogether and idly breaking the hedges with his stick.” He turned back from Hendon without having the courage to purchase any refreshment at all, and still the phantom of his crime pursued him, as Duncan’s image did Macbeth. He fancied all the children knew him even, and at last he shaped his course towards Hatfield, frightened now even with inanimate things.

“Stones have been known to move and trees to speak,” and at “nine o’clock at night, quite tired out, and the dog limping and lame from the unaccustomed exercise,

he turned down the hill by the church of the quiet village," and crept with his dog into the sitting-room of a quiet tavern, and entered the tap-room, and some countrymen drinking before it, who made way for the new comer, but he sat as far away as possible, and ate and drank alone. The scene is terribly dramatic as the pedlar came in and produced some rustrum that was to cure anything, and take out any kind of stain. "Wine stains, fruit stains, beer stains, water stains, paint stains, pitch stains, mud stains, blood stains," and then he took up Sikes's hat, on which, as he said, he saw a stain "not wider than a shilling, but thicker than half-a-crown," and this he said he would do before the "gentleman" had time to order him a pint of ale, when Sikes snatched it away with an oath and left. Hatfield has been well shown here by Mr. Vanderhoof, and this is its most picturesque aspect.

The tavern where Sikes and his dog entered for the much-needed refreshment may be identified with at least three or four in the little town, and the visitor cannot but be struck with the dilapidated condition of a place that skirts the walls of a great palace like Hatfield House. The pedlar, who seemed to be well known to the audience, was proceeding to take Sikes's hat, which lay on the table, and to remove the stain, running over a list of stains that his certain remedy was a specific for, and when he came to blood stains Sikes, with a hideous imprecation, overthrew the table, and tearing the hat from him burst out of the house. Then, when he was out of the house he began to think that his conduct might excite suspicion, and with



HATFIELD.



strange perverseness he sought the old-fashioned little town again.

There is one dramatic incident recorded here that is incomparably told. The murderer, in doubt, solitude, and darkness, felt a dread coming over him, and reached Hatfield once more, where he stopped at the post-office just as the mail-coach arrived.

A gamekeeper had come from the Marquis of Salisbury's or some other residence near, and he took up a parcel he had been expecting. While Sikes watched the proceedings vacantly he heard the murder discussed, and shrunk again away.

*Oliver Twist* was written at 48 Doughty Street, Mecklenburg Square. Dickens removed here from his apartments in Furnival's Inn, after he was married, and here also he wrote the concluding numbers of *Pickwick*, and commenced *Nicholas Nickleby*.



48 DOUGHTY STREET.

## CHAPTER V.

## MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT.

IN the beginning of *Martin Chuzzlewit* Dickens shows his delight in the charms of nature. He describes the country town where Pecksniff resided and carried on his occupation of land-agent and architect and receiver of pupils who contributed a round sum for learning the profession, and paid him handsomely to be boarders in his house. "It was pretty late in the autumn of the year, when the declining sun, struggling through the mist that had obscured it all day, looked brightly down upon a little Wiltshire village within an easy journey of the fair old town of Salisbury;" and though very little indication is given of the village to which allusion is made, there is only one small country town that corresponds at all with the locality or the requirements, and that is the little town of Amesbury, which lies about seven or eight miles to the north of Salisbury, on the river Avon, and is hardly more than two miles from Stonhenge.

"Like a sudden flash of memory or spirit kindling up the mind of an old man, the sun shed a glory upon the

scene in which its departed youth and freshness seemed to live again. The wet grass sparkled in the light; the scanty patches of verdure in the hedges—where a few green twigs yet stood together, bravely resisting to the last the tyranny of nipping winds and early frosts—took heart and brightened up; the stream, which had been dull and sullen all day long, broke out into a cheerful smile; the birds began to chirp and twitter on the naked boughs, as though the hopeful creatures half believed the winter had gone by, and spring had come already. The vane upon the tapering spire of the old church glistened from its lofty station in sympathy with the general gladness; and from the ivy-shaded windows such gleams of light shone back upon the glowing sky that it seemed as if the quiet buildings were the hoarding-place of twenty summers, and all their ruddiness and warmth were stored within."

If there is any discrepancy about the architecture of the church it is not more than the slight license that Dickens sometimes takes to idealise his subject. There might be those who almost think he carries his license too far, as, for example, when he says in the twelfth chapter, "the towers of Salisbury Cathedral rise before them." Nobody knew better than Dickens that Salisbury has no towers, but only a single spire. Still all this in no way mars the beauty of his descriptions of nature. I would not have a line altered, and only mention this to answer any possible objection to the identification of his localities:

and if he speaks in *Copperfield* of the spire of Blunderstone Church instead of a squat, round tower, this in no way mars his exquisite and truthful description of the place, but simply supplies what every one must feel is a want to the church.

Amesbury, where Mr. Pecksniff and his family lived, was once the seat of an abbey, and it was well endowed, but it came to the ear of King Henry that the abbess and her nuns had not quite renounced the vanities of this wicked world, and in 1177 it was dissolved. Indeed, according to Dugdale (whose history of the monasteries will always rank among the most complete works in the world), the abbess herself, while instilling high moral maxims, as was her duty, into the minds of the novices, hardly enforced her teachings by that which is said to be "better than precept."

When the monastery was dissolved it was made a cell, as it was called, of the Abbey of Fontevrault in Anjou, and Eleanor, daughter of Geoffrey, was buried here. After this it became the retreat for ladies of high rank, and so well was it endowed from time to time by its inmates and their friends that its revenues, when the dissolution of monasteries transferred half the property of England to other's hands, amounted to a sum equal to £9500 per annum of our present money.

The church where Tom Pinch played the organ was at one time a part of this great foundation; and though Amesbury may not boast of a hostelry called the Dragon



it does of the George, which is only a humorous play on the name, just as when, in the sixteenth chapter, Martin Chuzzlewit is introduced to a professor in America by Mr. Jefferson Brick, who was said to have written some powerful pamphlets under the signature of "Suturb," or Brutus " reversed.

At Amesbury there is a house of great beauty that stands in a well-wooded park ; and as this and the estates that surround it have changed hands several times, it is not impossible that Mr. Pecksniff may have found many opportunities of turning a more or less honest penny in transfers of leases or holdings. The house stands back in a picturesque park, and the river Avon separates the grounds from the village. It was built by Inigo Jones, and belonged at one time to the Duke of Queensberry. Gay the poet lived there at one time, and now it is the seat of the Antrobus family.

But the house where Mr. Pecksniff practised and lived is in the middle of the country town, and in the road before it the signs of coming winter are beautifully pictured by Dickens. "The fallen leaves with which the ground was strewn gave forth a pleasant fragrance, and, subduing all harsh sounds of distant feet and wheels, created a repose in gentle unison with the light scattering of seed hither and thither by the distant husbandmen, and with the noiseless passage of the plough as it turned up the rich brown earth and wrought a graceful pattern in the stubbled fields. On the motionless branches of some

trees autumn berries hung like clusters of coral beads, as in those fabled orchards where the fruits were jewels ; others, stripped of all their garniture, stood each the centre of its little heap of bright red leaves, watching their slow decay ; others again, still wearing theirs, had them all crunched and crackled up as though they had been burnt ; about the stems of some were piled in ruddy mounds the apples they had borne that year ; while others (hardly evergreens this class) showed somewhat stern and gloomy in their vigour, as charged by nature with the admonition that it is not to her more sensitive and joyous favourites she grants the longest term of life. Still athwart their darker boughs the sunbeams struck out paths of deeper gold ; and the red light, mantling in among their swarthy branches, used them as foils to set its brightness off and aid the lustre of the dying day.

“A moment and its glory was no more. The sun went down beneath the long dark lines of hill and cloud which piled up in the west an airy city—wall heaped on wall, battlement on battlement. The light was all withdrawn, the shining church turned cold and dark, the stream forgot to smile, the birds were silent, and the gloom of winter dwelt on everything.

“An evening wind uprose, too, and the slighter branches cracked and rattled as they moved in skeleton dances to its moaning music. The withered leaves, no longer quiet, hurried to and fro in search of shelter from its chill pursuit ; the labourer unyoked his horses, and,

with head bent down, trudged briskly home beside them ; and from the cottage windows lights began to glance and wink upon the darkening fields."

This extract has been made at some length because often in the more exciting personal adventures that Dickens introduces us to his charming descriptions of country scenes are passed over. In *David Copperfield*, notwithstanding the earnest purpose he has in delineating the gloomy characters of the Murdstones, the cruelty of Creakle, or the selfishness of Steerforth, his whole soul is in Yarmouth, with its quaint seamen and fishing-boats, and its wonderful streets and passages, and the memorable drive to Blunderstone in the carrier's cart, with all the country beauties that surrounded the church and the old homestead. In *Nickleby* the picturesque features of the drive to Dotheboys Hall are not lost sight of, even though the destination was so dismal ; and when the somewhat fortunate acquaintance of Mr. Crummles was made on the journey to Portsmouth, the soul of Dickens seems to linger on the picturesque beauties of the Surrey Downs that shed a ray, if even a feeble one, on Nicholas and Smike. If the many graphic descriptions of country scenes were collected from the works of Dickens and made into a volume by themselves, and if they could have been illustrated by such pencils as Creswick's or Foster's, Dickens would live in memory for long, even if he never depicted a human character. When Verisopht and Hawk went out to fight the fatal duel all the sympathy of

Dickens was with the country lanes they passed through as the morning was only dawning on the night, and hardly had chased away the darkness. "It was already daybreak. Fields, trees, gardens, hedges,—everything looked very beautiful ; the young man scarcely seemed to have noticed them before, though he had passed the same objects a thousand times."

Napoleon used to say, and he said well, that he would live by his contributions to the arts of peace more than to those of war ; and if Jena and Austerlitz had never been, the *Code Napoléon*, at which he was almost as assiduous a reviser as Mr. Tronchin himself, was the work that he felt more pride and more pleasure in than all his conquests.

Not only does his delight for scenery break out in the country, but he sees even in town, and in the most repulsive parts even of town, there is something picturesque to cheer him. In a storm of rain in any town or city all we desire is to get out of the way, and find some shelter in a porch or gallery, and we not unnaturally think it a great nuisance ; but Turner, or Prout, or Copley Fielding can see beauty in it, and depict the indigo sky with a break of light beyond, and the waggoners covering their horses or hurrying to a covered passage.

There is another very beautiful description of an early winter's morning in the fifth chapter. Tom Pinch had to go to Salisbury in a "hooded vehicle" that looked "like a gig with a tumour" to bring the new pupil,

Martin Chuzzlewit, to Mr. Pecksniff's. "This was the glad commencement of a bracing day in early winter, such as may put the languid summer season (speaking of it when it can't be had) to the blush, and shame the spring by being sometimes cold by halves. The sheep bells rang as clearly in the vigorous air as if they felt its wholesome influence like living creatures. The trees, in lieu of leaves or blossoms, shed upon the ground a frosty rime that sparkled as it fell, and might have been the dust of diamonds; so it was to Tom. From cottage chimneys smoke went streaming up high—high, as if the earth had lost its grossness, being so fair, and must not be oppressed by heavy vapour. The crust of ice on the else rippling brook was so transparent and so thin in texture, that the lively water might, of its own free will, have stopped—in Tom's glad mind it had—to look upon the lovely morning."

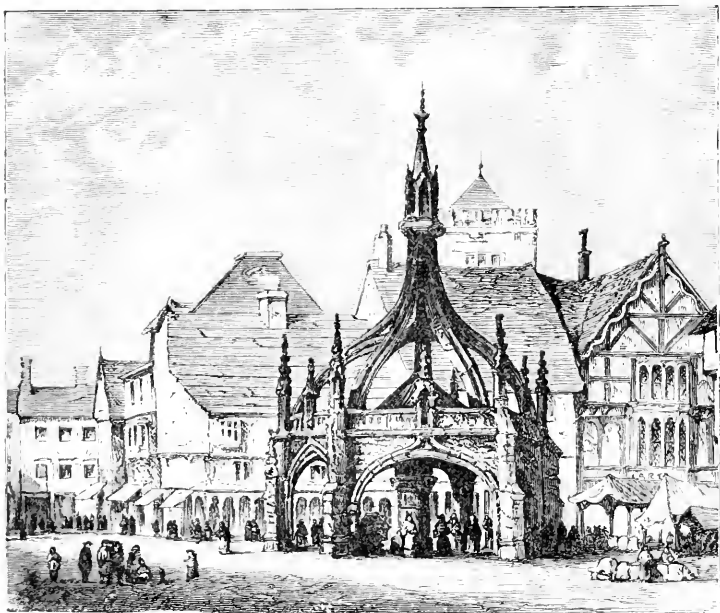
If this village at which Pecksniff lived was really Amesbury, Tom Pinch might probably drive along the river side through Great-Durnford; and the description exactly corresponds with the scene that would present itself. The picture of an early, exhilarating winter's morning is not excelled by anything in Sir Walter Scott. "And now the morning grew so fair, and all things were so wide awake and gay, that the sun seeming to say—Tom had no doubt he said:—'I can't stand it any longer; I must have a look;' streamed out in radiant majesty. The mist, too shy and gentle for such lusty company, fled

off, quite scared, before it ; and as it swept away, the hills and mounds and distant pasture lands, teeming with placid sheep and noisy crows, came out as bright as though they were unrolled bran new for the occasion. In compliment to which discovery the brook stood still no longer, but ran briskly off to bear the tidings to the water-mill three miles away."

At last the spire of Salisbury arose before Tom through the mist, and he was soon in the ancient city which is one of the most interesting and venerable in all England. The spire was built as a guide in the flat lands that surround it, and it is marvellous at what great distances it can be seen on a clear day from remote parts of Salisbury Plain. Dubious roads intersect this plain, sometimes lost in the scanty growth that is only a bare pasture for sheep, and sometimes their direction is so uncertain that a great landmark is necessary to direct the steps of the wayfarer. There are those who think that from a distance the spire looks thin and weak, and who would compare it somewhat unfavourably with the proportions of Norwich, or St. Mary's, Stamford, which is perhaps coeval with it, though on a much smaller scale ; but at any rate it shows itself clearly and incisively in the sky, and has for six centuries been a landmark to the tillers of the scanty soil who have sought the old city with their produce of poultry and butter.

The market-place is a perfect picture of a light and graceful building of the fifteenth century. The buttresses,

the arches, and the graceful canopy, may be copied by modern architects, but they cannot be improved.



MARKET-PLACE SALISBURY.

Salisbury is a thoroughly English city, without any trace of Roman or Norman work about it. Indeed there are not even the remains of a baronial fortress. Clear, bright water runs through its streets, and if we look over a parapet of a bridge we sometimes see a trout of fair dimensions dart away like a shadow.

The market that Tom Pinch saw was the successor of

one granted by Henry III.; and even now Salisbury market day presents us with a scene of unusual life and vigour. There are two market days in each week—Tuesday and Saturday—and it was, as is apparent from the history, on the Tuesday's market that Pinch went to Salisbury to meet the new pupil.

The house at which Tom Pinch put up his trap and horse, though it is not mentioned by name, can easily be identified. It is in High Street, near the quaint Dutch-like houses with overlapping tiled walls and red roofs, and the quaintest of oriel windows, and it is near the gateway that spans over the street and is yet called the city gate, with its battlements, and its coats of arms, and carved spandrils, that yet remain in entirety.

But Tom Pinch had some notion that Salisbury was a desperate, harum-scarum sort of place, and in general terms a most dissipated city; and having consigned his horse to the ostler, with a promise that he would in an hour or so return and see him take his corn, he set out for a stroll among the streets, "with a vague and not unpleasant idea" that he was doing a very dissipated sort of thing.

Salisbury is certainly a charming city for a stroll, and to one of Tom's quiet, habits a world of life seemed to be going on in its confines, "the thoroughfares about the market-place being filled with carts, horses, donkeys, baskets, waggons, garden stuff, meat," etc. etc. The farmers also that we meet at Salisbury market seem almost to be of a different type from any other we meet in England.



It was the writer's fortune to dine at a farmers' ordinary in the city, and though, when he happened to ask a question, he received an intelligible answer, the farmers, when they spoke among themselves, used a *patois* that was literally quite as if it had been the language one might expect to hear on market day in Dalmatia or Herzegovina. Somerset dialect, or Yorkshire, or even Lancashire, one may in an hour or two become familiar with, or at any rate it is possible to know what the conversation is about even if one could not exactly join in it with credit; but I endeavoured to listen to the farmers, who spoke quite audibly, and in one hour I did not recognise a single word they spoke—literally not one single word, whether it was yes or no. Yet, when they addressed me, whatever they said was clear enough, and in good English.

Tom Pinch might or might not have found the same difficulty, but he saw just the same scenes that any one now may witness if their business or their pleasure leads them to Salisbury on a Tuesday or a Saturday. "There were young farmers and old farmers, with smock frocks, brown great-coats, drab great-coats, red worsted comforters, leather leggings, wonderful-shaped hats, hunting whips, and rough sticks, standing about in groups or talking noisily together on tavern steps, or paying and receiving huge amounts of greasy wealth with the assistance of such bulky pocket-books, that when they were in their pockets it was apoplexy to get them out, and when they were out spasms to get them in again. Also there were farmers'

wives in beaver bonnets and red cloaks, riding shaggy horses purged of all earthly passions, who went soberly into all manner of places without desiring to know why, and who, if required, would have stood stock-still in a china shop with a complete dinner service at each hoof. Also a great many dogs that were strongly interested in the state of the market and the bargains of their masters ; and a great confusion of tongues, both brute and human."

Then we have Pinch's journey among the booths, and his wonder at the cutlery and all the tempting wares of the itinerant vendors, and his purchase of a seven-bladed knife, of which none of the blades would cut. Then he wandered along High Street and the market square, looking in at the shop windows, after taking a long and wondering look at the bank, which must be the Wilts and Dorset banking house, and wondering in which direction the caverns ran that contained the bullion. There were book-shops, with *Quarll and his Host of Imitators*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Arabian Nights*; and this poor Tom found to be the most trying shop of all. Then he surveyed the theatre with awe, which was not diminished when a sallow man with long hair came out and told a boy to run home and fetch his broadsword.

There is a beautiful little episode here on Salisbury Cathedral. Tom Pinch was of a musical turn, and used, indeed, to play the organ on Sundays at the church in the small country town where, as Pecksniff said to old Martin Chuzzlewit, he "took the liberty of dwelling." Whenever

he performed Mr. Pecksniff used from his square pew to look quite benevolently at the congregation, for poor Tom was so entirely like a piece of property belonging to himself that he somehow gradually came to believe that it was he who played upon the organ, and, as the performance was gratuitous, he fancied that he was conferring a great boon upon the congregation, and felt very benevolent. The organist's assistant at Salisbury was a friend of Pinch's, and when he went to the cathedral it was his great delight to listen to his performances, and join in the matins or vespers, as the case might be. "He had been, like Tom, an old fashioned boy at school, though well liked by the noisy fellows too;" and on the afternoon when Tom went it so happened that the assistant was on duty all alone, and there was no one in the dusty organ-loft but Tom and his friend.

The organ was the gift of George III., and it greatly interfered with the perspective of the cathedral in Pinch's time. The organ screen was there then, and it was not in good taste, but Wyatt, who designed it, was better versed in classical architecture than Gothic. "Tom helped him with the stops; and finally, the service being over, Tom took the organ himself. It was then turning dark, and the yellow light that streamed in through the ancient windows in the choir was mingled with a murky red. As the grand tones resounded through the church they seemed to Tom to find an echo in the depth of every ancient tomb." The farmers had jogged homewards,

and left Salisbury quiet, when Tom repaired to the inn in High Street and sat down to his dinner, "a well-cooked steak and smoking hot potatoes," and this was flanked by cheese and celery, and a jug of mighty Wiltshire ale, till the new pupil, Martin Chuzzlewit, arrived, and they took their journey home across the southern part of Salisbury plain to Pecksniff's residence. Once more the road they traversed is brought up again in the narrative, and that with equal interest. There is something always fascinating about Salisbury Plain. The great remains at Stonehenge were of venerable antiquity even a thousand years before William the Conqueror set his foot upon English soil, and the great stretches of unenclosed waste make one wonder why pains are not taken to bring so many almost wasted miles into cultivation. Then again Salisbury plain is connected in our reading with extinct fauna; the bustard used to roam at will over it, and indeed it was the author's good fortune to see two of the splendid birds in 1871, perhaps good fortune is hardly, under the circumstances, the right word, for they had been shot by a gamekeeper, and were sent in to Salisbury. Surely one thinks the benefit of the law should be extended to these almost extinct birds, and the few specimens that are left might be rigidly protected.

Before Salisbury was again visited is narrated the journey to London which Pecksniff took to see his relative, Martin Chuzzlewit. The old miser had sent for him, and pretended that he wished to remember him and

his daughters in his will, and even paid his expenses, while Pecksniff was an easy bait, and arranged that he should live at his house in Wiltshire. The Pecksniff family went by the heavy coach to Salisbury through Andover, Leverstock, Basingstoke, and Bagshot. Delightful enough the road was in summer weather, but on a winter's night the inside of the coach was inferior in comfort to the inside of a railway carriage,—even an ordinary third-class one, such as we see now in the principal lines in England; and Dickens has left records of the travelling by coaches in nearly all of his works. “The night wore away in the usual manner . . . the coach stopped and went on, and went on and stopped times out of number. Passengers got up and passengers got down, and fresh horses came and went, and came and went again with scarcely any interval between each team as it seemed to those who were broad awake.” On this road the horses were often changed after a run of seven miles; but all journeys came to an end, and at last Pecksniff, looking out of the window, said, in language that any one would be apt to use without the fear of Lindley Murray before his eyes, “Now it is to-morrow morning, and we are there.” Soon after the coach stopped at the office, where Pecksniff had the luggage left, and, taking a daughter under each arm, he managed, with much more dexterity than we should have given him credit for, to dive “across the street, and then across other streets, and so up the queerest courts, and down the strangest alleys, and under the blindest

archways, in a kind of frenzy—now thinking he had lost his way, now thinking he had found it—until at length they stopped at a kind of paved yard near the monument before a very dingy house”—and this house was Todgers’ boarding-house. Todgers’ seems to have been in a kind of labyrinth that nobody could be certain about finding, and some guests who had occasionally been asked to dine at Todgers’ are said to have wandered round and round the boarding-house and become so lost in the maze of streets that they have finally discovered their bearings by some steeple or distant object, and struck some highway they knew, and with relieved feelings recovered their homes. There is a district between Trinity Square, the Minories, and Crutched Friars that possibly corresponds in some measure with the district that is alluded to as Todgers’, but it is doubtful if Dickens had any precise spot in his mind ; the description is simply a very good one of many parts which lie between St. Katherine’s Docks and White-chapel. There was the staircase window which tradition said had not been opened for a century, and the cellar which had no connection with the house, “and which was reported to be full of wealth, though in what shape—whether in silver, brass, or gold, or butts of wine, or casks of gunpowder—was matter of profound uncertainty and supreme indifference to Todgers and all its inmates.”

But the “observatory on the top of the house was not the least characteristic part of the establishment. It contained posts and fragments of rotten lines once in-

tended to dry clothes upon ; and there were two or three tea-chests out there with forgotten plants in them like old walking-sticks. Whoever climbed to this observatory was stunned at first from having knocked his head against the little door in coming out, and, after that, was for the moment choked from having looked perforce straight down the kitchen chimney." But, as Dickens says, when once the summit was reached the sight was a very remarkable one. There were miles of housetops to gaze at if the day were bright, and the great monument which Wren put up, and steeples, towers, and belfries rose above the smoky atmosphere with shining vanes, and a whole forest of ships' masts.

It was while staying at Todgers that Pecksniff received the memorable rebuff from the wealthy brassfounder, at whose house Tom Pinch's sister was a governess. He had consented, in the height of his benevolence, to take some little parcel from her brother to her, and his daughters, under protest, as it were, consented to accompany their philanthropic father. A one-horse fly was hired, and, crossing London Bridge, they passed all the old inns that Dickens delighted in, and, driving through Newington and Walworth Road, they finally arrived, after a drive of a little more than two miles, at Camberwell. The description of the great brassfounder's residence is so well told that it must be quoted. It was "so big and fierce that its mere outside, like the outside of a giant's castle, struck terror into the vulgar minds, and made bold persons quail.

There was a great front gate with a great bell, whose handle was in itself a note of admiration ; and a great lodge, which, being rather close to the house, rather spoilt the look-out, certainly, but made the look-in tremendous. At this entry a great porter kept constant watch and ward, and when he gave the visitor high leave to pass, he rang a second bell, responsive to whose note a great footman appeared in due time at the great hall door." The precise tone of a London footman is well hit off here. Miss Pinch, as may be supposed, had but few visitors, and this caused a momentary difficulty with the official who had to announce the Pecksniffs. If it had been visitors for the family they would have been announced with cold respect, or if for the cook they would have been ushered in with a warm, personal interest. But, rising to the occasion, the skilful adherent just hit off the happy medium, and finally introduced the members of the Pecksniff family into a small room in the mansion. Miss Pinch's pupil made her appearance, and though not perhaps a very engaging young lady, she was, on account of her great expectations, embraced and flattered by all the visitors.

"A sweet face, my dears," said Mr. Pecksniff, turning to his daughters ; "a charming manner !" and then, producing a professional card, he begged of the young lady to assure her "distinguished parents" that, so far from intruding, he merely called to take some notice of Miss Pinch, whose brother was in his employ ; but at the same



time he could not leave the chaste and elegant mansion without adding his testimony as an architect, however humble, to the correctness and elegance of the owner's taste, etc. etc. Then, as they left, Mr. Pecksniff in loud terms expatiated upon the beauty of all the interior arrangements and furniture of the hall and passages ; and, indeed, by the time he had reached the front door he had delivered quite a compendious lecture upon internal house decoration. He was proceeding in the same strain to canvass the exterior of the building, and how the fluted Ionic well matched the console cornice and the window pediments with their dentils, when a window was thrown up, and the great apostle of art, with his well-trained daughters, thought the climax had now come, and the wealthy proprietor would arrest his exit by the lodge until he could come down to welcome the great man. But, alas for the vanity of human expectations ! All that Pecksniff heard was a peremptory order to "keep off the grass !" Not hearing the first command, Mr. Pecksniff merely took off his hat, saying—

"'Your servant, sir ; I am proud to make your acquaintance.'

"'Come off the grass, will you !' roared the gentleman.

"'I beg your pardon, sir,' said Mr. Pecksniff, doubtful of his having heard aright ; 'did you——?'

"'Come off the grass !' repeated the gentleman warmly.

"'We are unwilling to intrude, sir,' Mr. Pecksniff smilingly began.

“‘ But you are intruding,—unwarrantably intruding,—trespassing. You see a gravel walk, don't you? What do you think it's meant for? Open the gate. Show that party out.’”

This is really a charming scene, but it is probable that the brassfounder knew a little more of Mr. Pecksniff than the latter supposed.

The young ladies were more apt to fit themselves to London life than might have been expected from such recruits from a remote Wiltshire town, and were soon the life and soul of Todgers' boarding-house, even though it seemed to have numbered among its guests young gentlemen who believed they were, and perhaps really were, fit to be trusted alone in London.

The old-established firm of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son, Manchester warehousemen, “had its place of business in a very narrow street somewhere behind the post-office,” and in this street every house was gloomy, even on the brightest June morning; and in the hot dog-days each light porter watered the pavement before his master's premises with fantastic patterns from a water-can. We can yet see, in other parts of London, in nearly all the streets that run up from the river-side, some such other premises; and, what may seem almost out of place, we also see “spruce gentlemen, with their hands in the pockets of symmetrical trousers, contemplating their undeniable boots, in dusty warehouse doorways, which appeared to be the hardest work they did, except now and then carry-

ing pens behind their ears." And indeed it may seem singular to many visitors to London how frequently great industries are represented with hardly a sign of life. The smallest cutlery establishment in Sheffield or Birmingham, and the most unpretending of mills in either Manchester or Oldham or Rochdale, makes twenty times as much show and bustle as some of the greatest financial centres in London.

"A dim, dirty, smoky, tumble-down, rotten old house it was as anybody would desire to see, but the firm of Anthony Chuzzlewit and Son transacted all their business and their pleasure, too, such as it was; for neither the young man nor the old had any other residence, or any other care or thought beyond its narrow limits."

There was a grim humour in old Martin Chuzzlewit, who inveigled Pecksniff into being his host under the idea that he really believed him to be quite a single-minded relative, and had no designs at all upon his accumulated wealth.

All the scenes in London are life-like, and speak of a very different city from that we now know. But the time came at last when the Pecksniffs must part from their friends and the lodgers at the boarding-house whom the ladies had captivated. Mrs. Todgers took a regretful farewell of them, and even a more tender leave of the great architect, who, as it would seem, had been more than gracious to her. But the coach knew of no delay, and as the horn sounded the young ladies lay back in

their respective corners with melancholy reflections upon the close of their holiday. Their worthy parent, however, had fallen into old Martin Chuzzlewit's easy snare, and was reflecting upon the most summary way of dislodging his grandson as the coach rolled along through the pleasant lanes of Berkshire and Hampshire to their dwelling-place.

The two young men in Pecksniff's office little knew the storm that was brewing as the great and good man was approaching the Wiltshire village, and in happy ignorance they received Mr. Westlock's invitation to dine with him at Salisbury. He, too, had been a pupil of Mr. Pecksniff's, and found out the manner of man he was, but his time of service was over, and he had inherited a competence, and most naturally asked his well-tried friend, Tom Pinch, to come to the long-promised dinner at Salisbury and to bring the new pupil, Martin Chuzzlewit.

Mr. Pecksniff's horse was regarded as a kind of sacred animal, that could only be used by him or by some one duly commissioned by him, so both Pinch and Martin Chuzzlewit decided to go on foot to Salisbury. It was a grand walk on a cold day. The distance was eight miles, and as they left their dwelling the milestones fairly came and went, as though no distance had intervened between them. But when, as Dickens says, "the towers of the old cathedral' rose up before them a fall of snow had set in, and they came into the 'sheltered streets' as if they were walking upon a white carpet."

The inn they went to was not the homely one where Pinch first met Martin Chuzzlewit, but another ; and from the description we have very little difficulty in identifying the Angel. It was winter time, so that nearly everything was in season, and "the hall was a very grove of dead game and dangling joints of mutton." They could also recognise "an illustrious larder, with glass doors, developing cold fowls and noble joints."

Nothing can exceed, in a few words, the description given of a comfortable room filled with all appliances for a pleasant evening which Dickens gives of the private dining-room at the Angel. "In a room with all the window curtains drawn, a fire piled half-way up the chimney, plates warming before it, wax candles gleaming everywhere, and a table spread for three, with silver and glass enough for thirty." This was the picture that presented itself to the two new friends after their walk of eight miles on a frosty evening.

There is a graphic little description of the London coach coming down to Salisbury as the two friends, Tom and Martin, for such they had become, waited for Mr. Pecksniff on his road from London. As we may often see on frosty days in early winter, the premature frost had given way to rain, and nothing is more splashy than a December thaw, and, as Dickens has observed, it rained hard. Perhaps in the interest which is excited by the arrival of the virtuous architect at the lane which joined the Andover road and the meeting between him and the

somewhat selfish though by no means unkindly Chuzzlewit junior, the description of waiting for a coach on a winter's morning may be overlooked.

But for all this it is very graphic. We all know how interested we feel in waiting at some by-station for a stopping train, and if it is a winter's night and we seek the fire in the waiting-room, our repose is brief. The station-master tells us that our train is a quarter of an hour late, but the goods train that backs up into a siding to make way for the express, and the frightful steam whistling, render quietude all but impossible. In old coaching days it was different, and if we were waiting for a four-in-hand there was little fear of the vehicle being missed. Pinch and Martin were at the finger-post half-an-hour before the time the London coach was due. "It was not by any means a lovely morning, for the sky was black and cloudy, and it rained hard," and Mr. Chuzzlewit's temper was so severely tried that his equanimity quite left him, "for while he and Mr. Pinch stood waiting under a hedge, looking at the rain, the gig, the cart, and its recking driver, he did nothing but grumble; and but that it was indispensable that there should be two parties to any dispute he would certainly have picked a quarrel with Tom.

"At length the noise of wheels was faintly audible in the distance, and presently the coach came splashing through mud and mire with one miserable outside passenger crouching down among wet straw under a

saturated umbrella, and the coachman, guard, and horses in a fellowship of dripping wretchedness." There is something, however, in this outward phase of coach travelling that has its picturesque side. The four bays brought to a stand-still, steaming and breathing loudly, and the glare of the coach-lamps making the surrounding darkness more intense—then we knew that in a few moments the horses would start off at a gallop, and be quite lost in the darkness, guided not by rails laid down with mechanical precision, but by the steady hand, and the keen eye of the coachman.

The trip to America hardly falls within the limits of the present work, except indeed in so far as the setting off from Liverpool is concerned, but of this Dickens says very little. At the time he wrote, nearly all the emigrant traffic was in the hands of the Americans, and it was impossible to walk along the Liverpool docks, especially from the "Prince's" to the "Trafalgar," without being struck with the great number of flags that bore the stars and stripes; again and again have I wandered along the quays, some few years after *Chuzzlewit* was written, and been struck as a boy with this; but the American ships were better models, more neatly kept, and far more intelligently commanded than our own. They taught us our business, as we may say, and if, like England, they had struck off all shackles from shipowners, they would indeed have been formidable rivals, and of the twelve steamers that leave Liverpool for America weekly, it could hardly have been

said that every one was built and owned in England. But if a change has come over the harbours of England, we can recognise another and a much more important one in the cities of America, and that since the great civil war has ended. When Martin landed with his faithful henchman Tapley in New York, he was taken possession of by a journalist, who treated him hospitably enough, but, to quote Dickens again, Martin was greeted by "Here's the Sewer—the New York Sewer! Here's the Sewer's exposure of the Wall Street gang. Here's the Sewer's article upon the Judge that tried him day afore yesterday for libel, and the Sewer's tribute to the independent jury that did not convict him, and the Sewer's account of what they might have expected if they had. Here's the wide-awake Sewer now in its twelfth thousand, and still a printing off. Here's the New York Sewer."

"It is by such enlightened means that the bubbling passions of my country find a vent," said Colonel Diver, who was the editor of the *New York Rowdy Journal* to Martin Chuzzlewit, as he invited him to see the offices of the great journal, and partake of a bottle of Champagne of his own importation, which bottle increased from one to three as the morning passed. The introduction to Jefferson Brick, the "war correspondent" of the journal, was as follows—"You have heard of Mr. Jefferson Brick, I see, sir," quoth the Colonel with a smile. "England has heard of Jefferson Brick, Europe has heard of Jefferson Brick;" and in reply, when Martin began to apologise for his ignorance,



he was quickly stopped by the Colonel, "Oh, you Europeans! I have reason to know, sir, that the aristocratic circles of your country quail before the name of Jefferson Brick," etc. etc.

Now, at one time Jefferson Brick had some sort of a prototype in America, and if the picture we see in Dickens is somewhat over coloured, it is not more so than many others of characters that are drawn from English life, like "the Shepherd," or Sam Weller, or Sergeant Buzfuz. But the Americans are quite a changed people, it is a pleasant thing to record, since the days of Mr. Brick. There is much less of inflated language, and, as the writer can speak from personal knowledge of the country, both before and after the war, he may add that the national character is so much improved, and so raised, and Americans are so much more worthy of their traditions and their flag, that they might adopt for their motto, "*per castra ad astra*" with more aptness than the words were ever used.

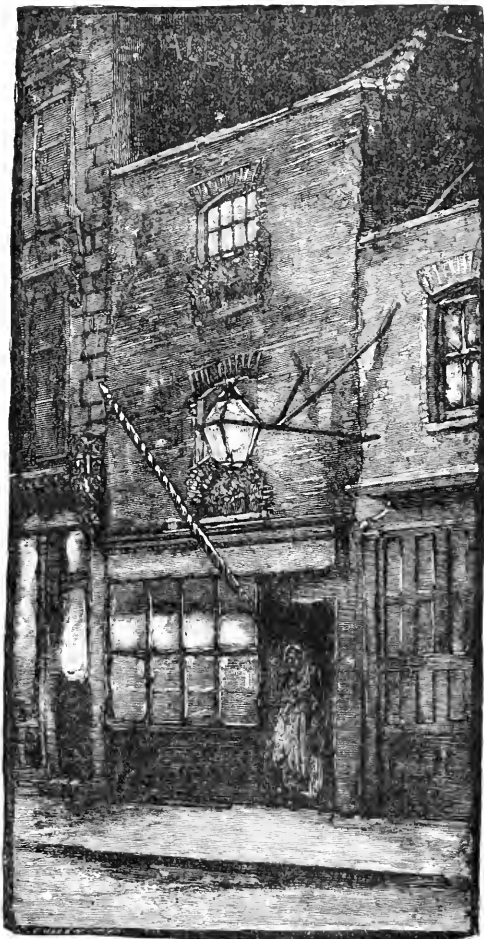
Kingsgate Street, where the immortal Mrs. Gamp resided, has altered but little from its old form. It runs from High Holborn to Queen's Square, and is yet so well supplied with barber's shops and very small traders, that one might almost fancy it must needs depend for its subsistence upon the outside world; yet let there only be any commotion in it—let a policeman, for example, have a difference with some resident or wayfarer, and the population that suddenly appears is something amazing. Eastern travellers tell us how, when a camel or goat or

any other animal of the desert has paid the debt of nature, and lies on the gravelly sands, that troops of vultures, unseen before, appear on the confines and cover the remains of the carcase ; and when some excitement appears in Kingsgate Street it is not too much to say that it would hardly be possible to follow the channels through which the expectant crowd blocks up the roadway. As I happened to pass through it two ladies who resided there would seem to have had a difference, or at any rate they were expecting one, for they were addressing each other in terms of such studious politeness, quite diplomatic indeed, that it was clear the protocols before an engagement were going on, and doors began to unlatch slowly, and at intervals, though they soon would be all as open as the doors of an excursion train ten minutes before its time of starting. The combinations in the nineteenth chapter are humorous. Pecksniff, mistaken for Mr. Whilks when he knocked at the door, and hearing, "Don't say it's you, Mr. Whilks, and that poor creetur Mrs. Whilks, with not even a pincushion ready. Don't say its you, Mr. Whilks!"

"It isn't Mr. Whilks," said Pecksniff. "I don't know the man. Nothing of the kind. A gentleman is dead, and some person being wanted in the house you have been recommended by Mr. Mould, the undertaker."

Mrs. Gamp with her large bundle, "a pair of pattens, and a species of gig umbrella, the latter article in colour like a faded leaf, except where a circular patch of lively blue had been dexterously let in at the top." But the

finest humour is where Mrs. Gamp in her measure hits off Pecksniff's vein and moralises to him in the cab. She was the more estimable party of the two, possibly a little more honest, but at any rate she was able to boast of a better knowledge of her own profession than Pecksniff had of his. The scene is almost as full of humour as Harry Foker's meeting with Major Pendennis at the coffee-room of the George Inn, Beymouth, when he suddenly woke up after



MRS. GAMP'S HOUSE, KINGSGATE STREET.

his dinner and found the Major sitting with his usual dignity, and entered upon a conversation with him in such familiar terms that his biographer is constrained to say that there were moments in his life when he would have "winked at the Duke of Wellington."

As for Mrs. Gamp, she was "like most persons who have attained to great eminence in their profession, she took to hers very kindly ; insomuch that, setting aside her natural predilections as a woman," she attended a birth or a death with quite an equal amount of zest and relish.

"And so the gentleman's dead, sir ! The more's the pity." She did not even know his name. "But it's what we must all come to ; it's as certain as being born ;" and then, being quite a match for Mr. Pecksniff even at his own weapons, and also being of much more humorous turn, she informed the stately architect how, "When Gamp was summoned to his long home, and she see him a-lying in Guy's Hospital with a penny-piece on each eye, and his wooden leg under his left arm, she thought she should have fainted away, but she bore up ;" and this would seem true if the rumours in Kingsgate Street were founded in fact ; for Mrs. Gamp had comported herself with such fortitude that she disposed of the remains of her deceased husband for the benefit of science. A drive of ten or twelve minutes brought them back to Chuzzlewit's, where Mrs. Gamp's professional duties commenced. Kingsgate Street is also the scene of the memorable quarrel between Mrs. Gamp and Betsy Prigg, in which the latter was certainly in the wrong.

The Bull Inn, Holborn, where Mrs. Gamp attended Mr. Lewsome, yet stands, though it seems to be not quite in as flourishing a condition as it was when she ministered to the wants of the apparently dying man. He took his draughts *regularly*, the experienced nurse said, and indeed her system of administering one was so simple that much trouble was saved with her patients. It consisted of "clutching them by the windpipe till they gasped," and immediately pouring out the quantity which was mentioned in the prescription. Indeed, she told the doctor when he called in the morning, and inquired whether he had taken his medicine regularly, that while either she or Betsy Prigg were in attendance there was "no fear of that."

Of Mr. Tigg Montague's career it is not too much to say that it was at once considered too absurd and overdrawn when it appeared. The Anglo-Bengalee Loan and Life Assurance Company, with its great brass announcement looking "bolder than the Bank;" "the offices newly plastered, newly papered, newly painted, newly counterpaneled, newly floor-clothed, etc., with goods that were substantial and expensive, and designed like the company to last," would hardly be needed now; there is a somewhat less expensive way of making a show of capital. But when Tigg Montague, for he had now reversed his name, explained to Jonas Chuzzlewit, who was as simple in knavery as honest men are in fair dealing, that the system was this: "B is a little tradesman

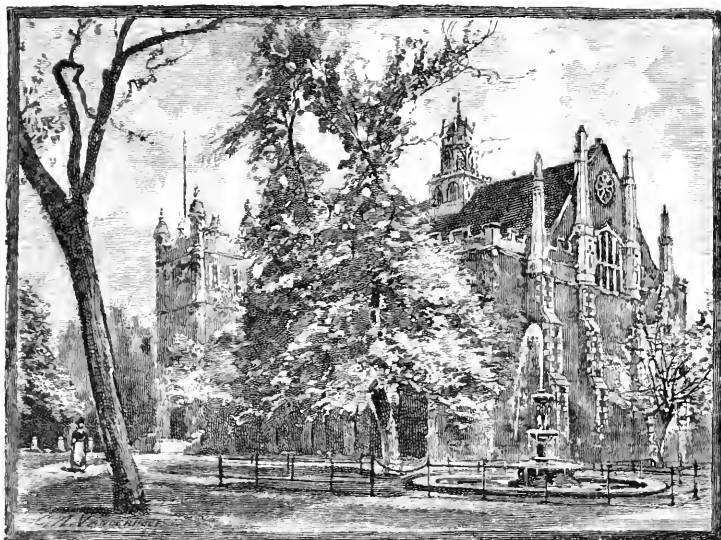
who wants a loan,—say fifty or a hundred pounds, perhaps more,—no matter. B proposes self and two securities. B is accepted. Two securities give a bond. B assures his own life for double the amount, and brings two friends' lives also, just to patronise the office.

“Besides charging B the regular interest we get B's premium, and B's friends' premiums; and we charge B for the bond; and whether we accept it or not we charge B for inquiries—and in short we stick it into B up hill and down dale, and make a devilish comfortable little property out of him.” This is almost exactly the system that was pursued in a very notorious office in Chancery Lane, which came to a sudden ending in consequence of a professional gentleman, who was not to be trifled with, applying for some temporary loan, and being in a sufficiently independent position to demand a scrutiny of their affairs.

Fountain Court has altered since the days when Tom Pinch used to meet his sister Ruth. She had walked briskly all the way from her lodgings, and now she crosses Fleet Street, dodging the cabs and omnibuses, enters the Temple Gate, and passes down the lane into Fountain Court—there to wait for her brother. The Temple figures again in Martin Chuzzlewit at the climax of the story, when old Martin Chuzzlewit appears in his true colours, and Pecksniff is treated in the way that his assumption and fawning hypocrisy merit.

London Bridge is again introduced in this book—for

it had a fascination for Dickens. It was a bright morning, when Tom who had come out with Ruth for an



FOUNTAIN COURT, TEMPLE.

early stroll before the commencement of the day's work. "There the steamboats lay alongside of each other; hard and fast for ever, to all appearance, but designing to get out somehow, and quite confident of doing it; and in that faith shoals of passengers, and heaps of luggage, were proceeding hurriedly on board. Little steamboats dashed up and down the stream incessantly. Tiers upon tiers of vessels, scores of masts, labyrinths of tackle, idle sails,

splashing oars, gliding row-boats, lumbering barges, sunken piles, with ugly lodgings for the water-rat within their mud-discoloured nooks; church-steeples, warehouses, house roofs, arches, bridges, etc. etc., were all jumbled up together, beyond Tom's powers of separation."

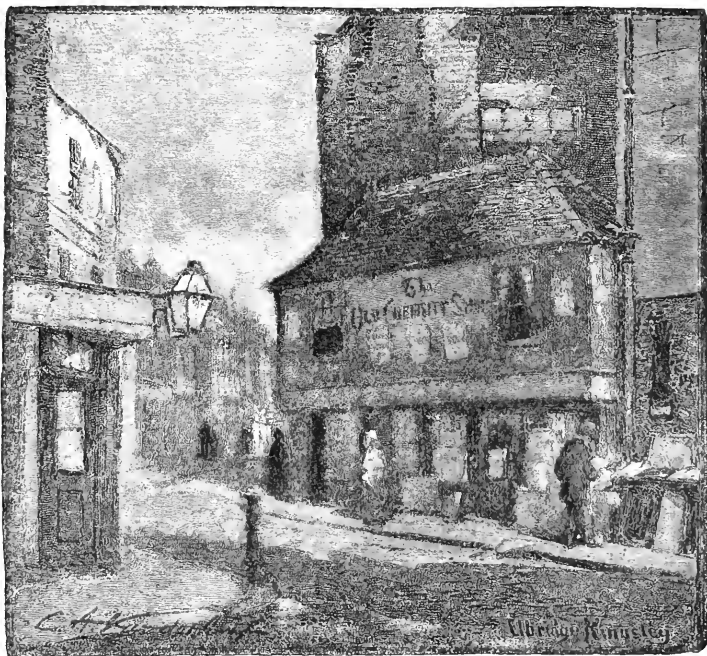


## CHAPTER VI.

## OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

IN some respects the *Old Curiosity Shop* is the most discouraging of all the works that Dickens has written, to illustrate with a pencil, because he has left little beyond descriptions of places and English scenes, without even indicating their whereabouts. Even the shop itself has disappeared, and Mr. Vanderhoof has adopted, very happily, another establishment of a similar character, and one that certainly would seem to fill all the requirements of the residence of little Nell and her grandfather. Those who are acquainted with the Holborn district will have no difficulty in remembering the original. When Kit had children six and seven years old he used to take them to see the place where the house had stood ; "but it had long been pulled down, and a fine broad road was in its place. At first he would draw with his stick a square upon the ground to show them where it used to stand. But he soon became uncertain of the spot, and could only say it was thereabouts, he thought, and these alterations were confusing." The old gentleman who tells the story

in the first chapter gives some indication of the kind of place it was, but none of the direction in which it lay.



OLD CURIOSITY SHOP.

Some descriptions in this chapter are very beautiful. "Covent Garden Market at sunrise, too, in the spring or summer, when the fragrance of sweet flowers is in the air, overpowering the unwholesome streams of last night's debauchery, and driving the dusky thrush, whose cage has hung outside the garret window, half mad with joy. Poor

bird, the only neighbouring thing at all akin to the other little captives, some of whom, shrinking from the hot hands of drunken purchasers, lie drooping on the path already, while others, sodden by close contact, await the time when they shall be watered up to please more sober company, and make old clerks, who pass them on their road to business, wonder what has filled their breasts with visions of the country." Though indeed the market stands in such strange and unfit surroundings, it cheers many a denizen of the city, and reminds him of sunny skies, and shady lanes, and broad gardens. David Copperfield speaks of the delight with which he strolled into Covent Garden Market to look at the pine apples, after he had inspected the windows of a venison shop in Fleet Street. Yet what a picture we have of it, our mutual friend. "The market of Covent Garden was quite out of the creature's line of road, but it had the attraction for him that it has for the worst of the solitary members of the drunken tribe. It may be the companionship of the gin and beer that slip about among carters and hucksters, or it may be the companionship of the trodden vegetable refuse, which is so like their own dress that perhaps they take the market for a great wardrobe ; but be it what it may, you shall see no such individual drunkards on doorsteps anywhere as there. Of dozing women drunkards especially, you shall come upon such specimens there, in the morning sunlight, as you might seek out of doors in vain through London."

“There is a swarm of young savages always flitting about this same place, creeping off with fragments of orange chests and mouldy litter—Heaven knows into what holes they convey them, having no homes!—whose bare feet fall with a blunt dull softness on the pavement as the policeman hunts them.”

Dickens has many allusions to Covent Garden Market in various of his works, and there is no place where the variety of character, which he could so readily hit off, is better adapted for study. Alton Locke speaks of the sound of lumbering wheels that met his wakeful ears all through the night, as the string of heavy waggons followed one after the other with country produce, and he used to go to the garret window where he lived to contemplate them, and the country delights that in his fancy they had left. Such feelings are common to thousands who pass by Covent Garden on an early summer or spring morning, when the demand for vegetables is unlimited at the West End and the City. The loads these waggons bear is enormous, and it is no uncommon sight to see the cauliflowers and cabbages and turnips built up to a height of twelve or thirteen feet from the carrying planks of the waggon; indeed the work of packing must have been performed by very practised hands, or else the high load would never have reached its destination; but the vegetables are as neatly piled as the ashlar or the bricks in a carefully-built wall. As the vehicles begin to unload, the shandries and light trucks of the green-

grocers from every quarter of London put in an appearance, and the vast piles of produce melt away ; a skirmishing and active contingent of costermongers' carts close in as the light traps of greengrocers retire, and in a short time the market has settled down to its usual routine of business ; for of course the stall-keepers there are among the purchasers just the same as the owners of the vans.

The flowers arrive later, and are soon divided among customers. And as Mr. Dickens has said in his *Guide to London* before quoted, "There are hundreds of women and girls among the crowd purchasing bunches of roses, violets, and other flowers, and then sitting down on the steps of the church or of the houses round the market dividing the large bunches into smaller ones, or making those pretty button-hole bouquets in which our London flower-girls can now fairly hold their own in point of taste with those of France or Italy." Yet so fresh are the vegetables, and years of skill have done so much to retain their freshness, that gentlemen who live near London, and at great care attend to their gardens, sadly admit that the best and by far the cheapest garden near London is Covent Garden.

The old gentleman, who appears but once in the old curiosity shop, describes the premises, and when he met the still older grandfather of Nell, to whom he consigned her after she had lost her way, described the shop as "one of those receptacles for old and curious things which

seem to crouch in odd corners of this town, and to hide their musty treasures from the public eye in jealousy and distrust. There were suits of mail standing like ghosts in armour here and there; fantastic carvings brought from monkish cloisters, rusty weapons of various kinds; distorted figures in china, and wood, and iron, and ivory; tapestry and strange furniture that might have been designed in dreams." Such establishments have long disappeared, and the treasures that Nell's grandfather owned within the confines of the old curiosity shop would now, in a much more important establishment at the West End of London, realise him abundant wealth, even enough to satisfy his intentions towards his grand-daughter.

These old curiosity shops yet remain in ancient English cities, especially if they are resorted to by visitors, but even among these such collections as those which Mr. Trent had gathered together about him would now command a much higher value than they would have done of old. In Chester there are a number of old curiosity shops, and they are much frequented by American purchasers. One or two of the principal ones have occasional suits of armour, and china ornaments, and punch-bowls of forgotten age and design, and many examples of every kind of chest and press—all of them more or less genuine and authentic. Some of these antique stores are of a humbler type, but seem to drive a fine business. Chairs are bought up from farm-houses at prices that continually are rising, and these are carved

all over. Chester would furnish some perfect pictures of the old curiosity shops that Dickens drew, for some of these are ancient buildings themselves, with carved gables and overhanging fronts, and decorated outside with the quaintest of carved panels. The profits of old Mr. Trent's magazine were not enough, apparently, for the expectations of the old man, and he betook himself to the fatal avenues of the gaming-table to increase his stores;—with what result need not even be chronicled. Of course his accumulations—for he would seem himself at one time to have acquired some wealth—were soon swept away, as were also the sums he could extract from Quilp.

There is little indication of the direction which little Nell and her worthless grandfather took, but it is pretty clear that it must have been to the East of London. "The town was glad with morning light; places that show ugly and distrustful all night long now wore a smile, and sparkling sunbeams, dancing in chamber windows, and twinkling through blind and curtain before sleepers' eyes, shed light into dreams, and chased away the shadow of the night. Birds in hot rooms covered up close and dark felt it was morning, and chafed and grew restless in their little cells; bright-eyed mice crept back to their tiny homes and nestled timidly together; the sleek house cat, forgetful of her prey, sat winking at the rays of the sun starting through keyhole and cranny in the door, and longed for her stealthy run and warm sleek bask outside. The nobler beasts, confined

in dens, stood motionless behind their bars and gazed on fluttering boughs." "Two pilgrims, often pressing each other's hands, or exchanging a smile or cheerful look, pursued their way in silence. Bright and happy as it was, there was something solemn in the long deserted streets, from which, like bodies without souls, all habitual character and expression had departed, leaving one dead uniform repose that made them all alike." Then came, as they journeyed on, straggling carts and coaches rumbling by, and there were tradesmen beginning to open their shops; only the very enterprising ones at first, and those at long intervals, until as day dawned all the shops began to show some signs of life, and finally they reached "the haunts of commerce and great traffic, where many people were resorting, and business was already rife. The old man looked about him with a startled and bewildered gaze, for these were places that he hoped to shun . . . ; again, this quarter passed, they came upon a straggling neighbourhood, where the mean houses, parcelled off into rooms, and windows patched with rags and paper, told of the populous poverty that sheltered there."

Here we have a clear indication of the road which they took. It could only be such a direction as would lead from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Tottenham Court Road, through Holborn and Cheapside, and on to Shadwell and Linchouse. The neighbourhood of the Tower would naturally remind the old man of the Tower



and the consequent proximity of Quilp's dwelling, even though they had left him behind sleeping in unconscious ignorance of their departure. Then come the tumble-down tenements of Limehouse and Shadwell, and finally the straggling off of the town into country as they reached the borders of Essex. There were "pert cottages with garden plots" of angular shape laid out in beds with box-wood borders, and here and there a public-house with a bowling-green or tea gardens, that scorned its old-fashioned neighbour with the long wooden horse-trough before the door. But if any positive indications were wanting that they were travelling east it would be removed by the circumstance that they saw, in some of the little gardens passed, summer-houses made out of parts of old boats, "grottoed at the stems with toad stools or tight-sticking snail-shells." They then must have passed the Roding river; and having breakfasted they could the better enjoy "the freshness of the day, the singing of the birds, the beauty of the waving grass, the deep green leaves, the wild flowers, and the thousand exquisite scents and sounds that floated on the air." They had walked many miles from London; it could hardly have been less than sixteen, when they rested at a cottage, and were very kindly treated, and urged to finish their day's journey; but the old man said they must go to the next county town, which was five miles farther; but a waggon soon picked them up, and set them down at their destination; and this would be a little more

than twenty miles from the Metropolis. This would land the pilgrims at Chipping Ongers, where they naturally slept well after their weary journey. The direction they took from London is indicated with perfect certainty, and Chipping Ongers is the town they would certainly arrive at. The next day's walk was with Codlin and Short, about whose names there is much humour, and the changes that they rang upon them were characteristic of itinerant showmen. Thus "the real name of the little man was Harris, but it had gradually merged into the less euphonious one of Trotters, which, with the prefatory adjective Short, had been conferred upon him by reason of the small size of his legs. "Short Trotters" being, however, a compound name, inconvenient of use in friendly dialogue, the gentleman on whom it had been bestowed was known among his intimates either as Short or Trotters, except in formal conversations, and on occasions of ceremony.

Into this strange company Nell and her grandfather fell in the churchyard at the end of the first day's journey; on the second, they travelled with them, and made the best they could of the accident of meeting them, and they wound up at an out-of-date public-house, called the "Jolly Sandboys," almost more dead than alive, and wet through. "A mighty fire was blazing on the hearth and roaring up the wide chimney with a cheerful sound, which a large iron cauldron, bubbling and simmering in

the heat, lent its pleasant aid to swell. There was a deep red ruddy blush upon the room, and when the landlord stirred the fire, sending the flames skipping and leaping up, when he took off the lid of the iron pot and there rushed out a savoury smell, while the bubbling sound grew deeper and more rich, and an unctuous steam came floating out, hanging in a delicious mist above their heads,—when he did this Mr. Codlin's heart was touched." The next day's journey on the same road would bring them to Thaxted or Saffron Walden—the latter probably, though indeed this would involve a long tramp, and, as it would appear, the journey was occasionally stopped when any promising neighbourhood presented itself to the enterprising Codlin for a rehearsal; but it was gradually becoming more apparent to the watchful eyes of the little girl that Short and Codlin had a purpose in keeping them near their company, and their proceedings naturally made the child watchful and suspicious; and she soon observed that whenever they halted to perform outside a village alehouse or other place Mr. Codlin, while he went through his share of the entertainment, kept his eye steadily upon her and the old man, or, with a show of great friendship and consideration, invited the latter to lean upon his arm, and so held him tight until the representation was over and they went forward again." And now the end of the third day's journey is reached, and they find themselves near a town that would, according to the work done, correspond with the old Roman station of

Newmarket. It is thus described by Dickens—"They were drawing near the town where the races were to begin next day, for, from passing numerous groups of gipsies and trampers on the road, wending their way towards it, and straggling out from every by-way and cross country lane, they gradually fell into a stream of people, some walking by the side of covered carts, others with horses, others with donkeys, toiling on with heavy loads upon their backs, but all tending to the same point. The public-houses by the wayside, from being empty and noiseless as those in the remoter parts had been, now sent out boisterous shouts and clouds of smoke, and from the misty windows clusters of broad red faces looked down upon the road. On every piece of waste or common ground some small gambler drove his noisy trade, and bellowed to the idle passers-by to stop and try their chance; the crowd grew thicker and more noisy, and often a four-horsed carriage, dashing by, obscured all objects in the gritty cloud it raised, and left them stunned and blinded far behind. It was dark before they reached the town itself, and long indeed the few last miles had been. Here all was tumult and confusion; the streets were filled with throngs of people, many strangers were there, it seemed, by the looks they cast about; the church bells rung out their noisy peals, and flags streamed from windows and house-tops. In large inn-yards waiters flitted too and fro and ran against each other, horses clattered on uneven stones, carriage steps fell rattling

down, and sickening smells from many dinners came with a heavy lukewarm breath upon the sense. In the smaller public-houses fiddles with all their might and main were squeaking out the time to straggling feet ;” and so Dickens goes on through all the dismal revelry of the race-course. “Quickening their steps to get clear of all the riot and uproar, they at length passed through the town and made for the race-course, which was upon an open heath.” The poor child was “frightened and repelled by all she saw.” She went early in the morning to gather some wild flowers to make a few nosegays to sell on the race-course, and during the races she could not help wondering that such fine honest creatures as horses should make the men they drew about them such shocking vagabonds. She might have been reading the travel in *Gulliver* when he was drifted to some far-off shore where the horses were the rulers, and were served by the most degraded specimens of humanity, such indeed as constitute the rank and file of race-course meetings ; and he was at last politely told that he must leave, as he belonged to the species with which the horses were too familiar, though himself a superior specimen of the degraded order. When the showmen were engaged in their professional duties Nell watched the opportunity for them to escape into the country, fearing as she did that Short and his partner would take them to London, and then she had some vague terror that they would be handed back again to Quilp, but she pressed on through the shady country

lanes, which had, even in all their sorrow and forlornness, still something refreshing and hopeful. When the grandfather was startled at some sudden noise Nell told him that it was only the wind whistling or some dead branch falling, until at last the serenity and cheerfulness which she had at first assumed "stole into her breast in earnest, the old man cast no longer fearful looks behind, but felt at ease and cheerful, for the further they passed into the deep green shade the more they felt that the tranquil mind of God was there, and shed its peace on them. At length the path, becoming clearer and less intricate, brought them to the end of the wood and into a public road. Taking their way along it for a short distance they came to a lane so shaded by trees on either hand, that they met together overhead, and arched the narrow way. A broken finger-post announced that this led to a village three miles off, and thither they resolved to bend their steps. The miles appeared so long that sometimes they thought they must have missed the road. But at last, to their great joy, it led downward in a steep descent with overhanging banks, over which their footpath led, and the clustered houses of the village peeped from the woody hollow below. It was a very small place, and men and boys were playing at cricket on the green." This is a beautiful description of a typical English village, and one thing is quite clear, that it must have been to the eastward of the race-course they had left, for to the westward they would have found their way into the fen-country, but by travelling eastward

they would reach the favourite county of our author—Suffolk, and near Hadleigh, or Ipswich, or Stow Market, they would find many villages such as the one which has been so charmingly described, but as the road so far has been tracked out with certainty, it may be as well not to mar what is done by conjecture, or else there are two that could be pointed out in the district named that nearly fulfil the requirements. There was a school-house here, and the schoolmaster was smoking at the door, in almost a fit of abstraction, when Nell timidly asked him if he could recommend them to any cheap place to lodge at for the night, and laying down his long pipe he looked earnestly at her, and asked her to come in, and took them to his room, where he laid out some supper and bade them rest. Then we have the incident of the sick scholar that roused Nell's quick sympathy, and, finally, the schoolmaster, who was also parish clerk, begged of them to rest one day, as he wanted little Nell's company for a short space. The old man and Nell sat in the village school-room and heard the master instructing the boys in his quiet way, and though they were as rampant and unruly as boys generally are in such an establishment, when he told them about the sick pupil, who was the chief favourite, and who had written the beautiful texts and maxims that adorned the walls of the room, there was a calm. The boys who eat apples in school-time, and pinched, and made grimaces, and, in a word, improved the school hours, as boys too often will, when he told them what the dying

child had said last night, and how nearly his little race was run, were awed at once into silence. At twelve o'clock, when the time to disperse came, the schoolmaster told them that they need not return that day, and endeavoured to gain a hearing in the sudden demonstrations of joy which this news had caused. But for some time his efforts were in vain, and he only could at last obtain a hearing by holding up his hand "as a token of his wish that they should be silent;" they were quiet enough, and when he told them to be quiet for the sake of their little school-fellow there was a general and sincere murmur of acquiescence. Here Dickens has faithfully hit off an English school, and if such an appeal were addressed to any scholars, the uproarious students, whether they belonged to a village school or to Harrow or Eton, for they are not confined to any social class, would always be still. Nor does it greatly detract from their sincerity if, when they saw the sun shining and the birds singing as only the sun shines and birds do sing on holidays and "the hay entreating them to come and scatter it to the pure air," it was for a moment more than boys could bear, "and with a joyous whoop the whole cluster took to their heels, and spread themselves about shouting and laughing as they went." It was all over at the close of the day, and the little scholar died with his hand in broken-hearted Nell's, whose own sands had now so nearly ebbed out. The child as they left timidly offered the school-master some money which the lady on the race-course had given her,



and of course it was at once refused. There is a beautifully told incident connected with this money. When Nell and her grandfather were wandering with what Mrs. Jarley called "a vulgar punch," and when they had come to Newmarket, Nell stole away early in the morning to gather a few wild flowers to make into bunches to sell at the carriages on the course, but there were bolder beggars and adept fortune-tellers that generally elbowed her away, though some ladies did say, "See what a pretty face," "and then let the pretty face pass on without thinking how tired and hungry it looked. One lady seemed to understand the child, and only one;" she sat alone in a handsome carriage, while two young men in dashing clothes who had dismounted from it talked and laughed loudly at a little distance, appearing to forget her quite. There were many ladies all around, but they looked another way and left her to herself. She motioned away a gipsy woman urgent to tell her fortune, saying it was told her already, and had been for some years. What that fortune was, indeed, we hardly need a gipsy woman to tell.

In the city parts of the *Old Curiosity Shop* Dickens again visits the region of the Tower where Mr. and Mrs. Quilp had their residence, and which was a part of London that many scenes are laid in. Of Quilp himself one hardly knows what to say; he is not drawn from any living character, and it would almost seem that in him some confirmation of the Darwinian theory might be found.

Types of species, according to the great naturalist, sometimes reappear, after having been lost in the cycles of time—even if only for a moment—and the “dog-like smile,” and the impish cunning, that are almost libels on the brute creation, can but be accounted for upon the Darwinian theory. He was a little dwarfish deformity, of much ability, and of great physical strength; and he seemed to have little pleasure excepting in mischief. He was enormously rich, and “collected the rents of whole colonies of filthy streets and alleys by the water side, advanced money to the petty officers and seamen of merchant vessels, had a share in the ventures of divers mates of East Indiamen, smoked his smuggled cigars under the very nose of the Custom-house, and made appointments on 'Change with men in glazed hats and round jackets pretty well every day.”

At the time when this was written there is no doubt that with an abundant command of means like Quilp possessed, great returns might be looked for in many ventures, and hence he so easily fell himself a prey to Nell's grandfather, the imbecile, wretched gambler, partly on account of his supposed wealth, and partly, as it would seem, from the respectability that his honest-eyed and beautiful grand-daughter conferred upon him. When Quilp began to suspect that something was wrong, and taxed the old man with haunting the gaming-tables, and losing the large sums he had lent and advanced to him, the only reply was, as he turned his gleaming eyes to the

dwarf, "Yes, it was my mine of gold,—it is—it will be till I die;" and then Quilp, with a contemptuous look that he might be well excused for, said, "That I should have been blinded by a mere shallow gambler!" The residence of Quilp and his wife was on Tower Hill, "and in her bower on Tower Hill Mrs. Quilp was left to pine in the absence of her lord, when he quitted her on his business which he has been already seen to transact." He had a rat-infested dreary yard on the Surrey side of the river, which was called Quilp's Wharf, "in which were a wooden counting-house, burrowing all awry in the dust, as if it had fallen from the clouds, and ploughed into the ground; a few fragments of rusty anchors; several large iron rings; some piles of rotten wood; and two or three heaps of old sheet copper, crumpled, cracked, and battered." Mr. Quilp was by trade a ship breaker, which would easily account for the miscellaneous collection of goods about him, and these all have a market price in London, at which they can at once be converted into cash. Mrs. Quilp was a pretty blue-eyed woman, "who, having allied herself in wedlock to the dwarf in one of those strange infatuations that are by no means scarce, performed a sound practical penance for her folly every day of her life.

There is hardly a pleasanter trip from London than the sail down the river to Greenwich, and the life on the river almost reminds us of the floating population that we read of in the eastern rivers. "A fleet of barges was coming lazily on, some sideways, some head first, some stern first;

all in a wrong-headed, dogged, obstinate way, bumping up against the larger craft, running under the bows of steam-boats, getting into every kind of nook and corner where they had no business, and being crunched on all sides like so many walnut shells ; while each, with its pair of long sweeps struggling and splashing in the water, looked like some lumbering fish in pain. In some of the vessels at anchor all hands were busily engaged in coiling ropes, spreading out sails to dry, taking in or discharging their cargoes. In others no life was visible but two or three tarry boys, and perhaps a barking dog running to and fro upon the deck, or scrambling up to look over the side, and barking the louder for the view. Coming slowly on through a forest of masts was a great steamship, beating the water in short impatient strokes with her heavy paddles, as though she wanted room to breathe, and advancing in her huge bulk like a sea monster among the minnows of the Thames. On either hand were long lines of colliers, and between them vessels slowly working out of harbour with sails glistening in the sun, and creaking noises on board echoed from a hundred quarters. The water and all upon it was in active motion dancing and buoyant, and bubbling up ; while the old gray Tower and piles of building on the shore, with many a church spire shooting up between, looked coldly on, and seemed to disdain their chafing restless neighbour." All this confusion may be seen at any time in a trip to Greenwich, and the passenger wonders more and more how the great traffic of London

can be carried on through it all, but it is becoming a serious question if the time has not arrived for attempting to amend the growing evil.

There are two kinds of barges, the sailing barge and the dumb barge, and the fleet of both of them is very large indeed. More than five hundred of the sailing barges leave the London docks daily to distribute their freight and, besides these, there is the enormous fleet of dumb barges ; these literally, as is said, come on sideways and endways "but all in a wrong-headed obstinate way." These dumb barges, in fact, are presided over by a man with a sweep-oar, whose office it is to keep the boat moderately straight, and as free as circumstances will admit from collisions with other vessels ; but all the motive power is derived from the ebb and the flow of the tide, and the barge has no more independent action than a broken spar. If the men who should guide them were at all skilful the helpless junks would still be a scandal, but they are not even that, in the greater number of cases, and they do not always make the best use of the little craftsmanship they have ; they do, indeed, excel at vituperation when they get under the bows of a steamer, which is an event of constant occurrence with them. Indifferent as is the character of the men who work the dumb barges, and too well known as many of them are to the police, it is only just to say that the navigators of the sailing barges who work the boats lower down the river are a different class of men. They are skilful and careful, and under-

stand how to give and take when a steamer is before them. Some of these have quite handy vessels, which are capable of considerable speed. One of the reasons why they are so much better is that they belong to an open service, while the river men are members of the Watermen's Company, and if they subscribe to its funds the assessors, who seem to be judge and jury and everything, grant their license.

In Bevis Mark's was situated the residence and the office of Mr. Sampson Brass. Dickens writes to Mr. Foster: "I intended calling on you this morning on my way back from Bevis Marks, whither I went to look at a house for Sampson Brass." This was once the great Jewish quarter of London, and gentlemen of the Hebrew persuasion were generally to be found here and at Aldgate, and Hound's-ditch and the Minories, Whitechapel, and Petticoat Lane, now called Middlesex Street, but it is more familiar even now to some of the ancient race as "the lane." Such was the character of Bevis Marks when the *Old Curiosity Shop* was written. There are certainly not many private houses here now; the place is principally occupied with warehouses; but there Miss and Mr. Brass used to practise as attorneys. Miss Brass was indeed the more acute lawyer of the two, and "had not wasted her speculations upon its eagle flights," but had carefully explored its more devious courses and pit-falls. Here also Mr. Quilp introduced Richard Swiveller as a clerk, and, as Quilp said, Miss Brass would teach him law. Sampson Brass pleaded

some engagement in the city, and left Swiveller to make a fair copy of an ejectment, while his sister, in whom Swiveller took an especial interest, was deeply engaged in making out a bill of costs, taking no notice of Dick, "but went scratching on with a noisy pen, scoring down the figures with evident delight, and working like a steam-engine." Then Mr. Swiveller gradually began to address himself to his task of copying out the ejectment, "a fair copy," as Mr. Brass said, and occupying for the time the stool Mr. Brass had left. That gentleman promised Quilp that he would soon find another stool in some second-hand shop for his new clerk. Here it was also that the eccentric single gentleman lodged, and paid all the Punch and Judys so handsomely for performing, hoping that at last he might obtain some tidings of his relatives, Nell and her grandfather. The residence of Mr. Garland at Abel Cottage, Finchley, might be identified very easily, and the quiet life they all led is very beautifully described in the fortieth chapter. Kit, as will be remembered, came to the notary's office and worked out the shilling in holding Mr. Garland's horse, as he had received such a sum in consequence of his employer having no smaller change about him. Mr. Garland, who had retired from business and lived at Abel Cottage, seems to have led a pleasant quiet life among his rustic surroundings. "On a fine day they were quite a family party, the old lady sitting hard by with her work-basket on a little table;" and then we have a picture of the old gentleman retaining

his health and vigour by digging and pruning in the well-sheltered garden, while Kit, on a short ladder against a southern wall, is trimming the leaves, and nailing up the shoots of wall fruit, and just as Kit had become valued by his employer, who discovered his honest worth, a new master, Mr. Witherden the notary, who said he could find him a much better employ, which indeed was with the single gentleman to go with him to find out the rendezvous of Nell and her grandfather. When Kit found out that this was what they required he at once consented, and learned in the notary's office that they were "from sixty to seventy miles away." This identifies the locality more clearly with what has already been conjectured.

The church and school-house where Nell finally rested from all her toils have no counterpart in any district where she may be supposed now to be. Her old friend the schoolmaster showed her his new house with much pride. "The room into which they entered was a vaulted chamber once nobly ornamented by cunning architects, and still retaining in its rich groined roof and beautiful tracery some remnants of its ancient splendour. Foliage carved in the stone, and emulating the mastery of nature's hand, yet remains to tell how many times the leaves outside had come and gone while it lived on unchanged. The broken figures supporting the burden of the chimney-piece, though mutilated, were yet distinguishable for what they had been,—far different from the dust without,—and showed sadly by the empty hearth like creatures who had



outlived their kind, and mourned their only too slow decay." The house had apparently been part of some monastic building which had formerly adjoined the church, and the room had been partitioned off at some comparatively recent time by a richly carved panelled oak screen, so as to form a sitting-room and bed-closet, and an open door that led into a small oratory or cell through which a ray of sun-light broken by ivy leaves was stealing. A few strange-looking chairs, and an old oak chest that once had held the records of the church, with a quaint table, and several articles of convenience, together with a stack of firewood laid in for winter, completed the furniture of the apartment, and naturally excited the admiration and delight of the poor wanderer ; and as she lay down to rest and saw the "glare of the sinking fire reflected in the oaken panels, whose carved tops were dimly seen in the dusky roof,—the aged walls where strange shadows came and went with every flickering of the fire,—the solemn presence within of that decay which falls on senseless things the most enduring in their nature : and without and around about on every side of death, filled her with deep and thoughtful feelings, but with none of terror or alarm." All the descriptions of this church and its surroundings are very beautiful, though, as has been said, we must seek for anything like them in some distant part of England. I know three such places are in a far western county, one near the Severn and one in the north. In the earliest edition of this work there are some illustrations

of great beauty by Cattermole, all in his very best style. There is one especially of Nell sitting in a chantry or some ancient private chapel which opens into the choir through a fine Norman arch. There is a font in it,—perhaps it may be urged that the place is an unusual one for such an article,—but it is not in its original place for the step has been cut to fit it in, and there are three knights in armour on rich tombs of the fourteenth century. The composition of this picture, and the play of light and shade, are very fine ; and there is farther on in the book another drawing by Cattermole of another rich chantry where she is buried, and her grandfather is sitting by the tomb he has done so much to make an early one.

## CHAPTER VII.

## DOMBEY AND SON.

THE localities of *Dombey and Son*, so far as they relate to London, are rather less definite than some others in different works of Dickens; and this seems hardly accountable at first, for the tale is one that especially relates to London and various phases of London life.

The description of Mr. Dombey's mansion is vague. "It was a large one on the shady side of a tall, dark, dreadfully genteel street in the region between Portland Place and Bryanstone Square. It was a corner house, with great wide areas, containing a whole suite of drawing-rooms looking upon a gravelled yard, where two gaunt trees with blackened trunks and branches rattled rather than rustled, their leaves were so smoke-dried. The summer sun was never on the street but in the morning about breakfast-time, when it came with the water-carts, and old clothes'-men, and the people with geraniums, and the umbrella mender, and the man who trilled the little bell of the Dutch clock as he went along."

When Mrs. Dombey was buried Mr. Dombey ordered

all the furniture to be covered up, and great chandeliers were robed in holland, and card-tables and sofas were heaped together with arm-chairs, and covered up with holland, looking like "a great winding-sheet."

The apartments which were reserved for Mr. Dombey himself "were attainable from the hall, and consisted of a sitting-room, a library (which, in fact, was a dressing-room, so that the smell of hot-pressed paper, vellum, morocco, and Russia leather, contended in it with the smell of divers pairs of boots), and a kind of conservatory or little glass breakfast-room beyond, commanding a prospect of the trees before mentioned, and, generally speaking, of a few prowling cats. These rooms opened upon one another." In these rooms Mr. Dombey used to sit in solitary state, and his youthful son Paul and his nurse Richards only saw him at a distance among the dark heavy furniture.

Now there may seem to be a little vagueness here, and if we seek for the house we must look for it in the neighbourhood of Manchester Square, or Baker Street, or Cavendish Square; and I have never been able to identify any particular mansion with the residence of the head of the house of Dombey and Son. There are, indeed, two that might answer the description, and in one a surgeon of great skill lives, while the other is occupied by a rather costly boarding-house. But there is some cause for this vagueness, and much excuse, for Dickens wrote the principal part of *Dombey* when he was at Geneva, and he

says that he felt a little astray. He missed his genial streets of London, with their quaint life and their strange dwellings. For myself, if I might venture to record my own experiences in the same page as those of Dickens, I would say that there are few more picturesque recollections than an early walk almost in any part of London, especially in summer, when the city is full of activity, and nearly every shop front has begun to show some signs of life, and water-cresses and prawns are being heralded in squares and past terraces in not unmusical tones by costermongers and basket carriers.

Mr. Pemberton, in his *Dickens's London*, has said that probably the circumstance that the author was residing on the Continent during the writing of the first part of *Dombey and Son* may account for there being less of London in it than in any other of his works; and this must account for the vagueness of the localities. In one of his letters to Foster he complains how sorely he misses the London streets, in which he was accustomed to walk daily and gather fresh food for his imagination; indeed, he goes so far as to say that he finds it almost impossible to do without them.

We have, in a preface to one edition, a curious instance of the individuality that connects itself with the surrounding objects while he writes. "I began this book by the Lake of Geneva, and went on with it for some months in France before pursuing it in England. The association between the writing and the place of writing is so curiously

strong in my mind that at this day, although I know in my fancy every stair in the little midshipman's house, and could swear to every pew in the church in which Florence was married, or to every gentleman's bedstead in Dr. Blimber's establishment, I yet confusedly imagine Captain Cuttle as secluding himself from Mrs. Macstinger among the mountains of Switzerland. Similarly, when I am reminded by any chance of what it is that the waves were always saying, my remembrance wanders for a whole winter night about the streets of Paris, as I restlessly did with a heavy heart on the night when I had written the chapter in which my little friend and I parted company."

Similarly, in a preface to *Copperfield*, he says: "It would concern the reader little, perhaps, to know how sorrowfully the pen is laid down at the close of a two years' imaginative task; or how an author feels as if he were dismissing some part of himself into the shadowy world, when a crowd of the creatures of his brain are going from him for ever. Yet I had nothing else to tell, unless, indeed, I were to confess (which might be of less moment still) that no one can ever believe this narrative in the reading more than I did in the writing."

In *Dombey* we are introduced to a character whose class has become now a matter of history, or at least very nearly so. When Toots called on Captain Cuttle at Gill's shop he was accompanied by the "Game Chicken," whom he introduced to the Captain, though he felt much surprise that the latter did not even recognise the name. "Mr

Toots explained that the man alluded to was the celebrated public character who had covered himself and his county with glory in his contest with the nobby Shropshire one ; but this piece of information did not appear to enlighten the Captain very much." He is aptly described as a " stoical gentleman in a shaggy white great-coat and a flat-brimmed hat, with very short hair, a broken nose, and a considerable tract of bare and sterile country behind each ear."

It is somewhat singular that Dickens has so little to say about this fraternity. He must have known every celebrated professor in London very well, and there was always a grim humour about them and their ways. The challenges which appeared in the papers that devoted themselves especially to their interests, and even the encounters themselves, were curious. Pierce Egan was their bard and historian, and some of his accounts were almost homeric, and were veiled in such excellent language, and all so full of metaphor, that there seemed to be nothing at all shocking in his narrative.

In Dickens's time the ring was in what its admirers would have called its glory. Not only was it patronised by the aristocracy, but a combatant was sometimes taken to the scene of his encounter in a coroneted chariot.

The friendship of Toots for the Game Chicken was quite in keeping with the ordinary life of men of leisure and education. It was no more derogatory to be on intimate terms with them than it would now be for a gentleman to walk along Regent Street with Messrs.

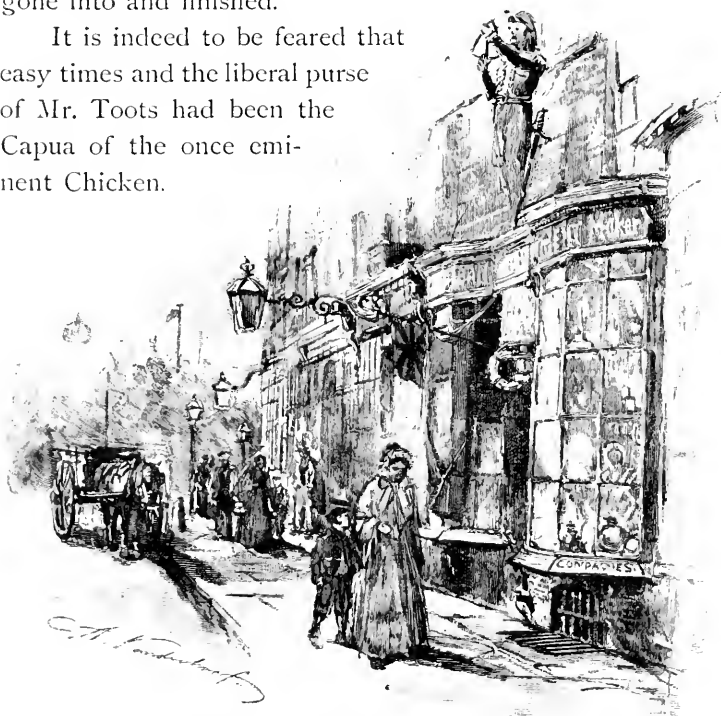
Archer or Fordham. Caunt, or Bendigo, or Ward, numbered members of both houses of Parliament among their acquaintances; though I would attach no credit to the often asserted statement that this acquaintance was so catholic as to number even occupants of the bench—not the judicial one, the other.

The only account of a passage-at-arms that I can remember in Dickens is in *Dombey*. When Susan Nipper left Dombey's employ she told Florence that she was going to her brother's, "a farmer down in Essex," and with the money she had in the savings' bank they might be comfortable; and when she went home to her brother's she stayed for a rest with the cook at Mr. Toots's dwelling. The Game Chicken was there, and at once supposed she was Florence Dombey, whose father Toots had "doubled up," and so far relieved the Chicken of any anxiety about his master's or *protégé's* game quality. The Chicken himself caused Miss Nipper some slight astonishment, for he had just tried issues with "the Larkey one," and had been worsted, as it appeared, in the combat. "His visage was in such a state of dilapidation as to be hardly presentable in society with comfort to the beholders. The Chicken himself attributed this punishment to his having had the misfortune to get into Chancery early in the proceedings, when he was severely fibbed by the Larkey one and heavily grassed. But it appeared from the public records of that great contest that the Larkey Boy had it all his own way from the beginning, and that the



Chicken had been tapped and winged, and had received pepper, and had been made groggy, and had come up piping, and had endured a complication of similar strange inconveniences, until he had been gone into and finished."

It is indeed to be feared that easy times and the liberal purse of Mr. Toots had been the Capua of the once eminent Chicken.



THE LITTLE WOODEN MIDSHIPMAN.

It may be curious to remark that the name is not quite a haphazard one, but a professional gentleman of

more or less skill and eminence did assume the title, and was to be seen in London during the earlier part of Dickens's lifetime.

With reference to the woodcut of the "wooden midshipman," it would seem that the artist has adopted the nautical instrument shop at No. 99 Minories as being a more genial and natural place where we should be introduced to Sol Gills and Captain Cuttle ; and Mr. Pemberton has adopted this as the more ideal spot. But the real wooden midshipman yet stands at No. 157 Leadenhall Street, opposite the old East India House ; and until lately, probably even till the present time, a naval and nautical instrument maker carried on a successful business there. "Just round the corner stood the rich East India House, teeming with suggestions of precious stuffs and stones, tigers, elephants' howdahs. Anywhere in the vicinity might be seen pictures of ships speeding away full sail to all parts of the world ; outfitting warehouses ready to pack anybody anywhere, fully equipped, in half an hour."

The proprietor of the little wooden midshipman had occupied his mart for as many years as a midshipman ever spends, even taking an extreme case, till he gets his promotion, and was looked up to as an authority in the vicinity.

When little Paul Dombey lost his mother Mrs. Toodle was selected to take care of him, and was thoroughly put through all her facings by Mrs. Chick, Mr. Dombey's sister, and the two Toodles, apple-faced children, were

produced for the confused inspection of the lofty London merchant. The London and North-Western Railway was at that time coming into London, and Mr. Toodle was working in the tunnel that we now pass through on our way to Euston. The name of Toodle was, of course, far too plebeian for Mr. Dombey, and Richards was substituted with the full consent of Mr. Toodle, who, indeed, would have consented to anything if his wife ordered it. Staggs's Gardens, where the Toodle family lived, was situated in Camden Town, or, as the inhabitants called it, "Camberling Town." "It was a little row of houses with squalid patches of ground before them, fenced off with old doors, barrel staves, scraps of tarpaulin, and dead bushes; with bottomless tin kettles, and exhausted iron fenders, thrust into the gaps. Here the Staggs's Gardeners trained scarlet beans, kept fowls and rabbits, erected rotten summer-houses, dried clothes, and smoked pipes." A graphic description of the cutting of the tunnel is given. This, of course, is the tunnel at Primrose Hill.

"The first shock of a great earthquake had, just at that period, rent the whole neighbourhood to its centre. Traces of its course were visible on every side. Houses were knocked down, streets broken through and stopped, deep pits and trenches dug in the ground, enormous heaps of earth and clay thrown up, buildings that were undermined and shaking propped up with great beams of wood. Here a chaos of carts, overthrow and jumbled together, lay topsy-turvy at the bottom of a steep, unnatural hill;

there, confused treasures of iron soaked and rusted in something that had accidentally become a pond. Everywhere were bridges that led nowhere, thoroughfares that were wholly impassable. Babel towers of chimneys wanting half their height ; temporary wooden houses and enclosures in the most unlikely situations ; carcasses of ragged tenements, and fragments of unfinished walls and arches, and piles of scaffolding, and wildernesses of bricks, and giant forms of cranes, and tripods straddling above nothing. There were a hundred thousand shapes and substances of incompleteness wildly mingled out of their places, upside down, burrowing in the earth, aspiring in the air, mouldering in water, and unintelligible as any dream. Hot springs and fiery eruptions, the usual attendants upon earthquakes, lent their contributions of confusion to the scene. Boiling water hissed and heaved within dilapidated walls ; whence, also, the glare and roar of flames came issuing forth ; and mounds of ashes blocked up rights-of-way, and wholly changed the law and custom of the neighbourhood.

“ In short, the yet unfinished and unopened Railroad was in progress, and from the very core of all this dire disorder trailed smoothly away upon its mighty course of civilisation and improvement.

“ But as yet the neighbourhood was shy to own the Railroad. One or two bold speculators had projected streets, and one had built a little, but had stopped among the mud and ashes to consider further of it. A bran-new

Tavern, redolent of fresh mortar and size, and fronting nothing at all, had taken for its sign The Railway Arms; but that might be rash enterprise—and then it hoped to sell drink to the workmen. So the Excavators' House of Call had sprung up from a beer-shop, and the old-established Ham and Beef Shop had become the Railway Eating-House, with a roast leg of pork daily, through interested motives of a similar immediate and popular description. Lodging-house keepers were favourable in like manner, and for the like reasons were not to be trusted. The general belief was very slow. There were frowzy fields, and cow-houses, and dunghills, and dust-heaps, and ditches, and gardens, and summer-houses, and carpet-beating grounds, at the very door of the Railway. Little tumuli of oyster-shells in the lobster season, and of broken crockery and faded cabbage leaves in all seasons, encroached upon its high places. Posts, and rails, and old cautions to trespassers, and backs of mean houses, and patches of wretched vegetation, stared it out of countenance. Nothing was the better for it, or thought of being so. If the miserable waste ground lying near it could have laughed, it would have laughed it to scorn, like many of the miserable neighbours."

When Paul Dombey was in his last illness he had a great desire to see his old nurse, and he sent Susan Nipper to try to find her. The coachman who drove the cab was nearly in despair; and Walter Gay, who had been a long stroll, happened to pass. He had spent his Sunday

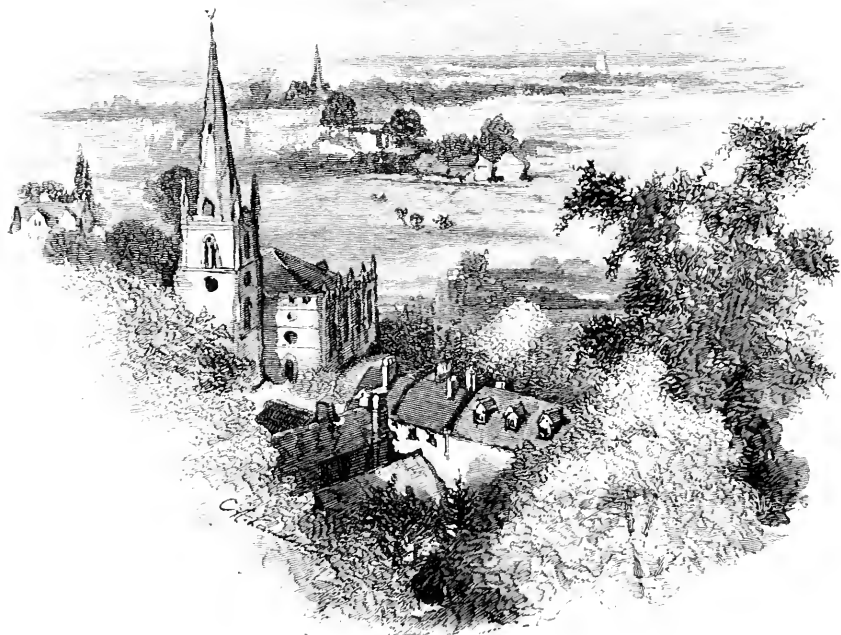
beyond Hampstead, "listening to the birds, and the Sunday bells, and the softened murmur of the town ; breathing sweet scents," sometimes thinking of going away on his distant voyage, and putting the thought from him as fast as it rose. When he had approached the city he was called from a cab, and he recognised Susan Nipper, who had gone in quest of Mrs. Toodle, and was in despair of finding Staggs's Gardens. The coachman appealed to Walter with a sort of exulting rebuke : "That's the way the young lady's been a'go'in on for upwards of a mortal hour, and me continually backing out of no thoroughfares where she *would* drive up. I've had a many fares in this coach, first and last, but never such a one as this."

When Susan appealed to Walter he at once went into the search with enthusiasm, and the author's account of his search will prevent us from spending much time in trying to find the locality, for, indeed, it bears traces of having been written on the Continent, or at least in some distant place. "There was no such place as Staggs's Gardens. It had vanished from the earth. Where the old rotten summer-houses once had stood palaces now reared their heads, and granite columns of gigantic girth opened a vista to the railway world beyond. The miserable waste ground, where the refuse matter had been heaped of yore, was swallowed up and gone, and in its frowzy stead were tiers of warehouses crammed with rich goods and costly merchandise. The old bye-streets now

swarmed with passengers and vehicles of every kind ; the new streets that had stopped disheartened in the mud and waggon-ruts formed towns within themselves, originating wholesome comforts and conveniences belonging to themselves, and never tried nor thought of until they sprung into existence. Bridges that had led to nothing led to villas, gardens, churches, healthy public walks. The carcasses of houses and beginnings of new thoroughfares had started off upon steam's own speed, and shot away into the country in a monster train. As to the neighbourhood, which had hesitated to acknowledge the railroad in its struggling days, that had grown wise and penitent, as any Christian might in such a case, and now boasted of its powerful and prosperous relations. There were railway patterns in its drapers' shops, and railway journals in the windows of its newsmen. There were railway hotels, coffee-houses, lodging-houses, boarding-houses ; railway plans, maps, views, wrappers, bottles, sandwich-boxes, and time-tables ; railway hackney coaches and cab stands, railway omnibuses, railway streets and buildings, railway hangers-on, and parasites, and flatterers out of all calculation."

When Dombey and Major Bagstock made their memorable journey to Leamington the springs had not been in any great public estimation for more than about thirty years, although Camden spoke of their excellence in the reign of Elizabeth. Now its population is not only great and wealthy, but daily increasing, and numbers

some thirty thousand. At the beginning of the century it was hardly more than a pleasant country village, called Leamington Priors, from its connection with the Priory of



WARWICK AND LEAMINGTON.

Kenilworth, and a very beautiful melodious name it was. But it had achieved importance when the Major and Mr. Dombey arrived at the "Royal Hotel," which, of course,



is an alteration of the "Regent." Mr. Dombey and the Major met Mrs. Skewton at the pump-rooms, which then were perhaps the finest in England. Mrs. Skewton's daughter, Mrs. Granger, had been travelling over England with a view of changing the single condition of one, or perhaps both of them, and, as Edith Granger sadly said, when her mother remarked that they had been travelling from place to place for a change, "all the places were very much alike"—that is Harrowgate, Scarborough, and Torquay, and all such resorts of fashion.

There are many delightful rambles round Leamington, indeed it lies in the centre of the most beautiful part of England. Mrs. Skewton sighs after "nature" to Mr. Dombey, and eagerly embraces the idea of a journey or an excursion anywhere in the neighbourhood.

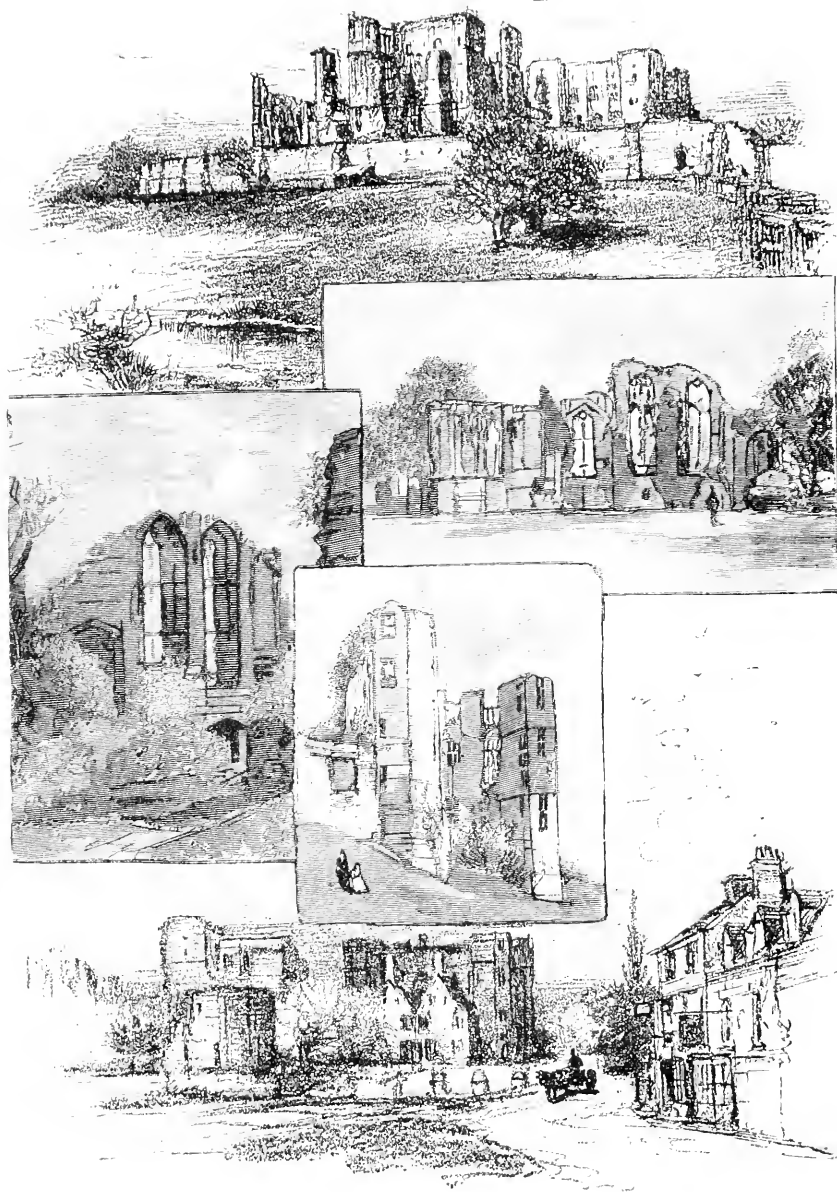
"Seclusion and contemplation are my what's-his-name?" said the ancient dowager; to which her daughter replied, that "If she meant 'Paradise' she had better say so, to render herself intelligible."

The hotel where Dombey stayed is as well known as if he were the proprietor, and to be daily seen. Mrs. Skewton was also well known, her name was Mrs. Campbell, and the tradesmen in private alluded to her as Mrs. Skewton. So thoroughly had she become identified with her soubriquet, that when a manager of a principal drapery establishment was serving her he unwittingly addressed her as Mrs. Skewton; she sharply replied that that was not her name, and of course all that could be done was to

say, with an apparent surprise, "Oh, I beg your pardon." Her perambulator, which is a word that has come into use since *Dombey* was written, was moved by an invisible page behind, and steered by the Honourable Mrs. Skewton. The page reappeared above the back when the Major and *Dombey* met the procession, and ducked down when orders were given for marching again.

How thoroughly lodging accommodation has altered in Leamington may be learned from the following account of what were, forty years ago, fashionable and very expensive apartments:—

"The Honourable Mrs. Skewton, being in bed, had her feet at the window and her head at the fireplace, while the Honourable Mrs. Skewton's maid was quartered in a closet within the drawing-room, so extremely small that, to avoid developing the whole of its accommodations, she was obliged to writhe in and out of the door like a beautiful serpent. Withers, the wan page, slept out of the house under the tiles at a neighbouring milk-shop," and the wheeled chair was kept in a sort of shed in the milk-house, where there was also a broken donkey-cart, in which the hens that laid the eggs (which were sold at full market prices) roosted, "persuaded to all appearance that it grew there, and was a species of tree." How different this is from even moderate lodging accommodation now any visitor can say. Here, however, Mr. *Dombey* and the Major called upon Mrs. Skewton and her widowed daughter, who was then in the prime of youth and beauty.



KENILWORTH.



She was the widow of Colonel Granger, and twenty years his junior, though, as Bagstock informed Mr. Dombey when they walked along the Leamington boulevard, Granger died at the early age of forty-two. He was the colonel of the regiment in which the major held his distinguished command, and of course the ages of the colonel and his wife, with any other light gossip, were well known to him. The party met again and again in the pump-room. Mrs. Skewton had learned that Dombey was a man of vast wealth, or, perhaps to speak more correctly, was reputed to be, and she and the major managed to arrange a trip to Warwick Castle, the latter enlarging upon the splendour of Dombey's establishment, and the entertainments they would enjoy there.

"You have been to Warwick often, unfortunately?" said Mr. Dombey to Edith.

"Several times."

"The visit will be tedious to you, I am afraid?"

"Oh, no, not at all."

And then Mrs. Skewton narrates how her cousin, Lord Feenix, had been to Warwick Castle fifty times, and if he came to Warwick next day he would make "his fifty-second visit." It was arranged that the ladies should dine at the Royal with the gentlemen, and then, in a barouche that had been waiting, they drove to the most perfect baronial residence in England; indeed, the view of the castle which looks across the mill pool has hardly a rival anywhere for picturesque beauty. Distance lends

some enchantment to the "feudal customs that prevailed in the Rhenish castles ; and so Mrs. Skewton, in wandering over the great rooms, broke out into ecstasies over the darling bygone times with their dear old dungeons, and their



WARWICK CASTLE, IN THE HALL.

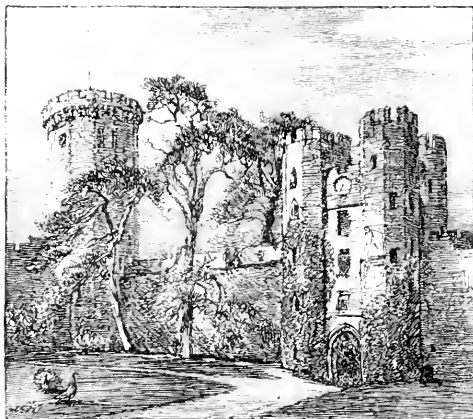
delightful places of torture, and their romantic vengeance, and their picturesque assaults, and sieges, and everything that makes life truly charming." "We have no faith in the dear old barons, who were the most de-

lightful of creatures, or the dear old priests, who were the most warlike of men, or even in the days of that inestimable Queen Bess upon the wall there ;” and so they went through the halls of the grand old fortress, a fortress that was founded by a daughter of King Alfred, rebuilt in Edward III.’s time, after being destroyed by insurgent barons, spared by Cromwell in its entirety for the loyalty of its noble owner to his cause, and, after having suffered terribly from a fire in 1871—which nearly consumed the great hall—it yet remains one of the grandest and most perfect relics of feudal times in England.

Indeed Warwick Castle figures most conspicuously all through the history of England. Piers Gaveston was led through its portal to execution, and if Guy is to some extent mythical, which, by the way, Dugdale, who is our final authority in monastic history, does not admit, Warwick the king-maker is not legendary, and his history is even more amazing than Guy’s. Stow says that when he came to London “six oxen were eaten at a breakfast, and every tavern was full of his meat ; for who that had any acquaintance in that house he might have had as much sodden and roast as he could carry away on a long dagger ;” and it is computed that no less than thirty thousand men were daily fed at his various palaces during the days of his prosperity. The Wars of the Roses, with which he was intimately connected, were so horrible that one is almost obliged to Mrs. Skewton for her suggestion that it is the “darling bygone times” that makes dungeons

and torture delightful. The gateway here shown is the inner court of Warwick Castle, and it is the one through which Gaveston was taken out to execution.

The surroundings of Leamington are lightly sketched and probably from memory, but they are truthful if they



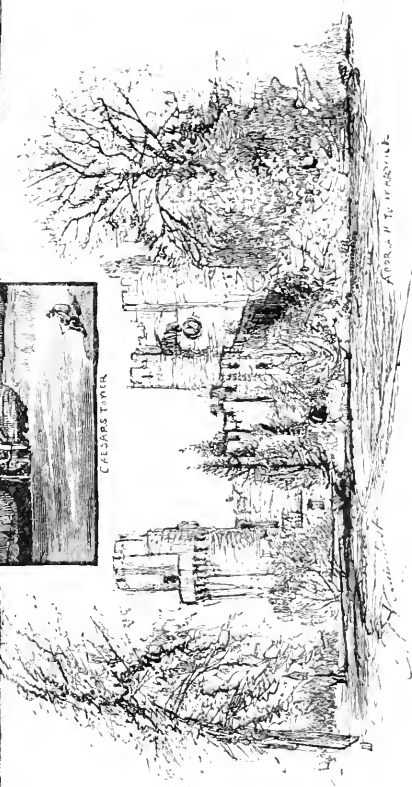
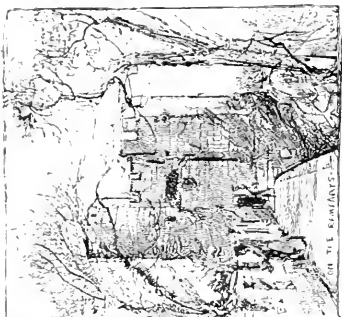
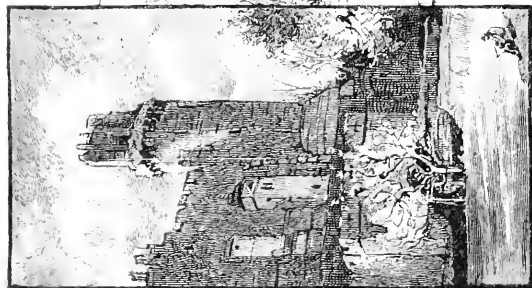
INNER COURT, WARWICK CASTLE.

are only suggestive, and those who know the charming lanes will at once recognise the walk that Carker took before breakfast when he came down from London to see his principal. "He strolled beyond the town and re-

entered it by a pleasant walk, where there was a deep shade of leafy trees, and where there were a few benches here and there for those who chose to rest;" in his walk beyond the town he had "strolled about meadows and green lanes, and glided among avenues of trees."

The town of Warwick, which the party visited repeatedly, and which almost forms a part of Leamington, is one of the most picturesque in the kingdom, and for quaint beauty it would seem hardly possible to improve





WARWICK CASTLE.



the Leicester Hospital, which stands at the entrance to the ancient town. A noble gateway stretches across the road, and forms the basement to a chapel. The roadway runs in a tunnel form under, and there is a curious terrace walk round the chapel and over the gateway, which is somewhat difficult to describe, but which, with its surroundings has few parallels in England. Joining this chapel is the hospital for pensioners founded by Earl Leicester, which encloses a quadrangle of astonishing beauty. The dark oak beams of which it is built, and the rich tinting that time has given the plaster, a tinting that shows through new coats very soon, make it a perfect paradise for lovers of antique architecture.

Of course the motley party visited Kenilworth, though probably none of them cared in the least for either that place or Warwick. Perhaps the most respectable of them all was Mr. Dombey himself; loftily pompous and ignorant, he was at least honest; so indeed was Bagstock, though he resembled one of the old style of noisy and turbulent ship captains in the good old slave days, who threw boot-jacks or any missiles at any one who was in their employ. "Where is my scoundrel?" said the major, looking wrathfully round the room. The native had no particular name, but answered to any vituperative epithet, presented himself instantly at the door, and ventured to come no nearer. "You villain," said the major, "where is the breakfast?" then when he upset a spoon the major "encouraged him with an awful shake of the fist."

Mrs. Skewton and Mrs. Granger had hardly a redeeming feature ; they were the shallowest and the most exceptionable output of a vicious system that ignores domestic comfort, and believes that true happiness consists in an "establishment," as it is conventionally termed. One almost grudges them the opportunities they had of enjoying one of the most beautiful parts of Europe. When Carker rode behind the barouche to Warwick Castle the description of the drive is much more like that which he would take from Leamington to Kenilworth, and indeed it so closely resembles that, that I have no hesitation at all in adopting it as this. The ride to Kenilworth was the day after the one to Warwick, and each was to be preceded by a breakfast with Dombey and his friend. Carker, the manager, who had come from London, and was in attendance, we are told, rode on horseback to the destination, and this is certainly Kenilworth. "Whether he looked on one side of the road or the other, over distant landscape, with its smooth undulations, wind-mills, corn, grass, bean-fields, wild flowers, farmyards, hay-ricks, and the spire among the wood—or upwards in the sunny air, where butterflies were sporting round his head, and birds were pouring out their songs—or downward where the shadows of the branches interlaced and made a trembling carpet on the road—or onward where the overhanging trees formed aisles and arches, dim with the softened light that steeped through the leaves—one corner of his eye was ever on the formal

head of Mr. Dombey, addressed towards him, and the feather in the bonnet drooping so neglectfully and scornfully between them, much as he had seen the haughty eyelids droop; not least so when the face met that now fronting it. Once, and once only, did his wary glance release these objects, and that was when a leap over a low hedge, and a gallop across a field, enabled him to anticipate the carriage coming by the road, and to be standing ready at the journey's end to hand the ladies out."

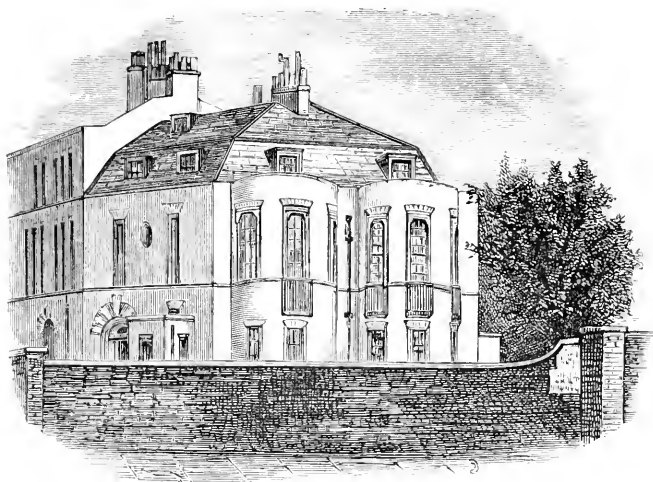
The party dismount at the grand old ruins, that Dugdale quaintly describes as the work of the able Geoffrey de Clinton, though the courtly writer is forced to say that blue blood did not run in his veins, for he was "of very mean parentage, and only raised from the dust by the favour of the said King Henry, from whose hands he received large possessions and no small honour, being made both Lord Chamberlain and Treasurer to the said King, and afterwards Justice of England, which advancements do show that he was a man of extraordinary parts. It seems he took much delight in this place, in respect of the spacious woods and that large and pleasant lake (through which divers pretty streams do pass) lying among them; for it was he that first built the strong castle here, which was the glory of these parts, and for many respects may be ranked in a third place, at the least, with the most stately castles in England."

Its familiar history connects it with some of the most prominent figures in our history,—with the heroic Simon de

Montfort, the stern and fearless John of Gaunt, and with Bolingbroke, all of whom in turn possessed it, and lived in regal splendour in its halls; but it is better known from its connection with later history, and the halo that Scott has thrown over its ruins. He peoples these again with Elizabeth and her court, and Leicester and his court, and with all the barbaric splendour of feasts, and tournaments, and music, and dancing, and with the strange and often boisterous pageantry in which Queen Elizabeth would seem to have delighted, or at any rate to have always been ready to participate with good nature. We are met at every stage in *Dombey and Son* with the difficulty that is encountered in starting, the want of greater precision in the details of the places alluded to, which is simply the result of the work having been written on the Continent of Europe, where, of course, he could have no opportunity of "sketching from nature." A record of the place where it was produced yet exists at Gadshill, in the shape of a summer-house that was presented to him by some of his English friends.

I will quote Mr. Pemberton on Brigg Place, the house in which Mrs. MacStinger lived and attended to the welfare of Captain Cuttle. "It is another place of which the London Directory owns no knowledge, but its locality—except that increase of business has obliterated some of its characteristics, and is fast making valuable every available yard of ground—is still easily to be recognised." Some parts of *Dombey* were finished in London at a comfortable

house in Devonshire Terrace, New Road, which is here shown. It is a pleasant roomy house with ample bow-windows, and dormer lights in the roof. Here Dickens



DICKENS'S HOUSE IN DEVONSHIRE TERRACE.

lived after removing from Doughty Street, and here he wrote a large part of the *Old Curiosity Shop*, *Barnaby Rudge*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and also put some finishing touches on *Dombey and Son*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## OUR MUTUAL FRIEND AND MISCELLANEOUS.

IT is suggested by Mr. Pemberton, that while Dickens was making his waterside researches for *Great Expectations*, he also took note of the spots that figure in *Our Mutual Friend*. Shadwell, Wapping, and Rotherhithe have abundant materials for his pen; and where an indifferent spectator sees nothing but discomfort and annoyance, he can individualise character and find something of interest in every passer-by. His acute sight enabled him to make a shrewd guess at the history and antecedents of those he met with in his rambles, and even to invest them with romance.

If we take the sketch which Mr. Vanderhoof has made of Limehouse Reach, it is impossible to deny it a very considerable amount of quaint picturesque grouping. The chimneys travel from the front to the back of the one-storey building that is in advance of the higher dwelling, and then there are verandahs that have at one time looked on a scene less squalid, with steep steps and gangways, all mingled in picturesque confusion. The



barges, too, have not lost their old picturesque Dutch-looking form, though, indeed, their days are numbered, and the reforms in the city, which can hardly be far distant, will embrace even these, and more useful and cleanly if less picturesque merchantmen will supplant the ancient shipping.

Dickens always delighted, even as a boy, in the excursions he made to these regions to see his godfather. He conducted a business which at one time was a profitable one, but has now quite succumbed to a new form of industry. Mr. Huffham was a block-maker and rigger, and his godson was always a welcome visitor. This district to the last of his life was always a pleasant one to him. There was the fresh smell of new wood shavings, and the wholesome odour of boiling tar and pitch, which, when not too pungent, is far from unpleasant; the shaping of oars and the adzing of masts and yards to a circular form by men who seemed at first sight as if they were hitting anywhere, and had no regular plans to go by, but who brought out a shapely spar with perfect certainty. Blocks are now almost a thing of the past. Iron rigging has superseded them, and an old salt who has not been at sea for some years would actually find a little difficulty in laying his hand upon the required rope; and, as one remarked to me, he would have to look up aloft and follow the halyard or brace down to the belays.

Gaffer Hexham lived in some nook in the Limehouse part of the Thames, and part of his business in life was to

search the river for any floating waifs and strays that might swim upon its surface, whether this proved to be spars, or planks, or drift-wood, or a more dismal merchandise—the dead bodies that ebbed and flowed with the tide from Southwark Bridge to Millwall. A reward is offered for these, and sometimes a few valuables are found in their pockets, though this cannot be calculated on with any degree of certainty.

When Lightwood and Eugene Wrayburn went to look at one of these ghastly prizes the route was “down by the Monument, and by the Tower, and by the Docks ; down by Ratcliffe and by Rotherhithe ; down by where accumulated scum of humanity seemed to be washed from higher grounds, like so much moral sewage, and to be pausing until its own weight forced it over the bank and sunk it in the river. In and out among vessels that seemed to have got ashore and houses that seemed to have got afloat ; among bowsprits staring into windows, and windows staring into ships ; the wheels rolled on until they stopped at a dark corner, river washed, and otherwise not washed at all, where the boy alighted and opened the door.” The rest of the way they had to walk. It was not far, and they were soon at Hexham’s house.

“The low building had the look of having been once a mill. There was a rotten wart of wood upon its forehead that seemed to indicate where the sails had been, but the whole was very indistinctly seen in the obscurity of the night. The boy lifted the latch of the door, and they

passed at once into a low, circular room, where a man stood before a red fire looking down into it, and a girl sat engaged in needlework. The fire was in a rusty brazier, not fitted to the hearth, and a common lamp shaped like a hyacinth root smoked and flared in the neck of a stone bottle on the table. There was a wooden bunk or berth in a corner, and in another corner a wooden stair leading above, so clumsy and steep that it was little better than a ladder. Two or three old sculls and oars stood against the wall, and against another part of the wall was a small dresser, making a spare show of the commonest articles of crockery and cooking vessels. The roof of the room was not plastered, but was formed of the flooring of the room above. This being very old, knotted, seamed, and beamed, gave a lowering aspect to the chamber ; and roof, and walls, and floor, alike abounding in old smears of flour, red lead (or some such stain which it had probably acquired in warehousing), and damp, alike, had a look of decomposition."

Quite corresponding with this weird description of the component parts of one of the waterside houses is the graphic picture of the interior of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters. "The wood forming the chimney-pieces, beams, partitions, floors, and doors, of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, seemed in its old age fraught with confused memories of its youth. In many places it had become gnarled and riven, according to the manner of old trees ; knots started out of it, and here and there it seemed to

twist itself into some likeness of boughs. In this state of second childhood it had an air of being, in its own way, garrulous about its early life. Not without reason was it often asserted by the regular frequenters of the Porters that when the light shone full upon the grain of certain panels, and particularly upon an old corner cupboard of walnut wood in the bar, you might trace little forests there and tiny trees like the parent tree in full umbrageous leaf.

“The bar of the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters was a bar to soften the human breast. The available space in it was not much larger than a hackney coach, but no one could have wished the bar bigger, that space was so girt in by corpulent little casks, and by cordial bottles radiant with fictitious grapes in bunches, and by lemons in nets, and by biscuits in baskets, and by the polite beer-pulls that made low bows when customers were served with beer, and by the cheese in a snug corner, and by the landlady’s own small table in a snigger corner near the fire, with the cloth everlastingly laid.”

It is not difficult to select from the group of houses which form the river front here one which might represent the Six Jolly Fellowship Porters, though I could not find the exact sign anywhere; but the description answers well for many a one, not only here, but in Bristol or Newcastle-on-Tyne, and formerly in Liverpool, until the increasing demand for dock accommodation swept them away. Dickens thus describes it:—

“The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters already mentioned

as a tavern of dropsical appearance had long settled down into a state of hale infirmity. In its whole constitution it had not a straight floor, and hardly a straight line, but it had outlasted, and clearly would yet outlast, many a better trimmed building, many a sprucer public-house. Externally it was a narrow, lop-sided, wooden jumble of corpulent windows heaped one upon another, as you might heap as many toppling oranges, with a crazy wooden verandah impending over the water,—indeed the whole house, inclusive of the complaining flagstaff on the roof, impended over the water, but seemed to have got into the condition of a faint-hearted diver who has paused so long on the brink that he will never go in at all.”

This description applies to the river frontage of “The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters.” The back of the establishment, though the chief entrance, was there so contracted that it merely represented, in its connection with the front, the handle of a flat-iron set upright on its broadest end. This handle stood at the bottom of a wilderness of court and alley; which wilderness pressed so hard and close upon “The Six Jolly Fellowship Porters” as to leave the hostelry not an inch of ground beyond its door. For this reason, in combination with the fact that the house was all but afloat at high-water, when the “Porters” had a family wash, the linen subjected to that operation might usually be seen drying on lines stretched across the reception-rooms and bed-chambers.

There is in *Our Mutual Friend* an account of an old-fashioned church at Millbank, of which the somewhat



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S CHURCH, SMITH SQUARE.

fantastic description is given in *Our Mutual Friend*. "In this region are a certain little street called Church Street, and a certain little blind square called Smith

Square, in the centre of which last retreat is a very hideous church, with four towers at the four corners, generally resembling some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back with its feet in the air." This is the description of St. John the Evangelist, a church that occupies all the centre part of Smith Square. Yet the church was the work of an architect who enjoyed great honour in his day, and whose designs figure worthily among stately elms in some of the most beautiful parts of England. By some strange mutation in affairs the architecture that exercised Dickens is again coming in vogue, and the Church of St. John the Evangelist is greatly admired by architects and artists. A happy issue even this is, out of the iconoclastic spirit that has within the last half century destroyed the interest and the beauty of some—it is supposed nearly eighty per cent.—of the parish churches of England. The quaint high pews that are now so prized among artists and antiquarians, and that are unhappily becoming so rare, were of the date of this church; and the details of the church itself are chaste and good. Probably the revived interest in this style may preserve the remnant that remains of our old parish churches; they are nearly all destroyed, but some portion may escape. Of the origin of Mr. Venus's establishment we have Mr. Foster's authority for saying that his trade was brought under Dickens's notice by Marcus Stone, who had seen such a place at Seven Dials in St. Giles; and we may quote the

words of the proprietor, as he sums over a list of his valuables to Mr. Wegg: "You're casting your eye about the shop, Mr. Wegg. Let me show you a light. My working bench. My young man's bench. A nice tub. Bones, various. Skulls, various. Preserved Indian baby. African ditto. Bottled preparations, various. Everything within reach of your hand in good preservation. The mouldy ones a-top. What's in those hampers over them again? I don't quite remember. Say human, 'various!' Cats! articulated English baby." A list of curiosities that Dickens would have built a world of romance and history upon.

*Our Mutual Friend* gives us a graphic account of a London fog. Those who have not seen what Mr. Guppy used to call a "London particular, or what in the Metropolis is termed a "pea-souper," can form very little idea of what one really is. When the Americans come over to London, they are rather apt to smile at an English fog, that is, if they have never seen one, and speak of those on the banks of Newfoundland that cover a thousand miles and more. I have seen many of the latter, and some that would be considered dense ones; and it has also been my lot to see several of the London fogs, though the worst I ever saw was, I am assured, hardly up to what Guppy designated the London particular. Well, any fog that ever stole over the "banks" is simply a blaze of light, if compared to the cloud that settles over London in winter when a continuance of



easterly winds has driven the damp mists from the Essex and Kent marshes into the Metropolis. The damp air is light, for mists always ascend, and the sulphurous carbonetted gas that rises from thousands of chimneys cannot escape. There are doubtless many other minor causes that produce the phenomenon known as a London fog, but at any rate it stands all alone. Then those who stay at home have the advantage of those who live out of town and return to their daily business by Euston or Paddington stations, and have to make their way through a darkness that may be felt. The Hebrew residents of Bevis Marks or Hound's-ditch can fairly rejoice in the gas that rather brightens up their places of business which they have no call to leave, and taunt the West-Enders as they grope their way with their own happier lot, the Children of Israel have light in their dwellings. But let Dickens himself describe one. "It was a foggy day in London, and the fog was heavy and dark. Animate London, with smarting eyes and irritated lungs, was blinking, wheezing, and choking; inanimate London was a sooty spectre divided in purpose between being visible and invisible, and so being wholly neither. Gas-lights flared in the shops with a haggard and unblest air, as knowing themselves to be night creatures that had no business abroad under the sun; while the sun itself, when it was for a few moments dimly indicated through circling eddies of fog, showed as if it had gone out, and was collapsing flat

and cold. Even in the surrounding country it was a foggy day, but there the fog was gray; whereas in London it was at about the boundary line, dark yellow, and a little within it brown, and then browner, and then browner, until at the heart of the city—which call St. Mary Axe—it was rusty black. From any point of the high ridge of land northward, it might have been discerned that the loftiest buildings made an occasional struggle to get their heads above the foggy sea, and especially that the great dome of St. Paul's seemed to die hard; but this was not perceivable in the streets at their feet, where the whole Metropolis was a heap of vapour charged with muffled sounds of wheels, and enfolding a gigantic catarrh.

At nine o'clock on such a morning the place of business of Pubsey and Company was not the liveliest object in St. Mary Axe; which is not a very lively spot with a sobbing gas-light in the counting-house window, and a burglarious stream of fog creeping in to strangle it through the keyhole of the main door. But the light went out, and the main door opened, and Riah came forth with a bag under his arm.

The "Seven Dials" was always a place where Dickens was able to see life in the phases in which he loved to contemplate it. It is within the west end of London, but it contains a population as poor and almost as lawless as any that are to be found in the precincts of London Bridge. The readiest way to reach

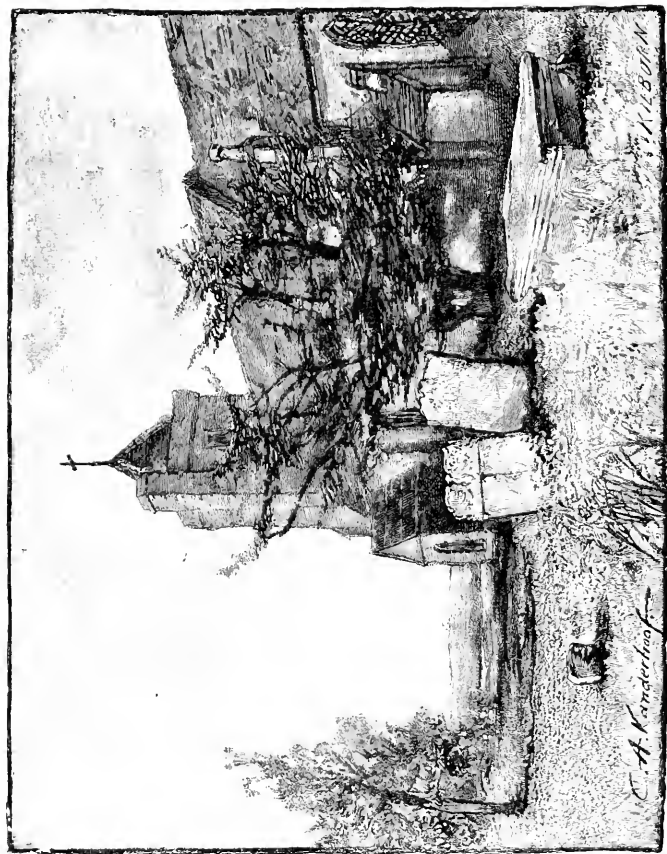
it is through St. Martin's Lane, crossing between Cranborne Street and Long Acre; and Mr. Dickens, in his *Guide to London*, to which not only these pages, but every one who is a visitor to London is indebted, says that "turning up northwards the stranger finds himself in a street altogether unique in its way. It is the abode of bird-fanciers," and in it every variety of lop-eared or Russian rabbit, or any other kind, may be purchased. Pigeons of every sort, from Almond bald-pates to carriers, are represented here, and even rare foreign cage-birds may be had at any time by a purchaser. Dog-fanciers, also, are well represented, and perhaps they are advisedly called "fanciers," for if there is a very choice "King Charles" or fashionable which any of the dealers happen to "fancy," and which is supposed to be following its mistress, it will probably soon have a temporary home at the Seven Dials.

Seven streets meet here, and hence it derives its name. The shops only sell second or third class articles, old dresses, old coats, old hats, or shoes, and anything in fact that has seen more prosperous days; yet even in its thronged thoroughfares may be seen youths who are devoted to the sports of childhood, such as tipcat, battledore, and shuttlecock, and tops, or marbles, and they pursue their amusements even under the most untoward circumstances with great energy, and sometimes indeed not without peril to the passer-by.

Public houses abound in the Seven Dials, and on Satur-

day nights they are in the full glare of light and noise showing that whatever may be wanting at home there is money enough to spend upon alcohol. Sometimes we may see the men's wives anxiously waiting outside, and almost hoping against hope that they may come out before all their week's wages are done, and quite as often the women themselves are participants in the orgies. I had the fortune to see one episode that in all probability would have struck the humour of Dickens if he had witnessed it. Some reveller had left the precincts of a gin palace, either to get tobacco or meet a friend at a neighbouring place of like entertainment, or some such cause, when he fell into the hands, if not the arms, of his better half. He was not what is called very far gone, and had not indeed passed the amiable stage of inebriation, and addressed his lady in terms of great affection, repeatedly saying that she was his "diamond darling." He seemed to be a lusty fellow, and had clog boots on, which at a later period of the evening he might have put to evil use, but he was quietly captured and "cuffed," and indignantly told to "talk sense," and probably the lucky find saved his week's money, and may have enabled him to pass the ensuing week in comfort.

In *Great Expectations* the little village of Cooling figures. It was a favourite walk of Dickens by way of Higham, and it lies on the marshy lands that are between the Thames and Medway, and were at one time, and that even recently, a paradise for snipe and plover. Its



COOLING CHURCHYARD.



neglected roads are grown over with thistle and brier, and there are but a few scattered houses about it, and these almost partake of the desolate character of the church and its surroundings. "The churchyard was a bleak place, overgrown with nettles." The visit to this place should be made on a cloudy day, such as Dickens himself used to select, for it is then that the strange weird landscape is seen at its best. "As we stand in the graveyard, looking across the low wall over which the convict climbed before Pip dared to start away, we may see the same dreary marshes, and the same limitless stretches of low land and grass and mud, intersected with dykes and mounds and gates, and beyond this the silvery streak of the Thames appears at intervals."

On a hot July day all wears a roseate hue, and we can hardly suppose that the marshes, which are completely bathed in faint golden mist, are accumulating the materials for a London fog which will culminate in about four months from the time the prospect is delighting the eye of the wayfarer.

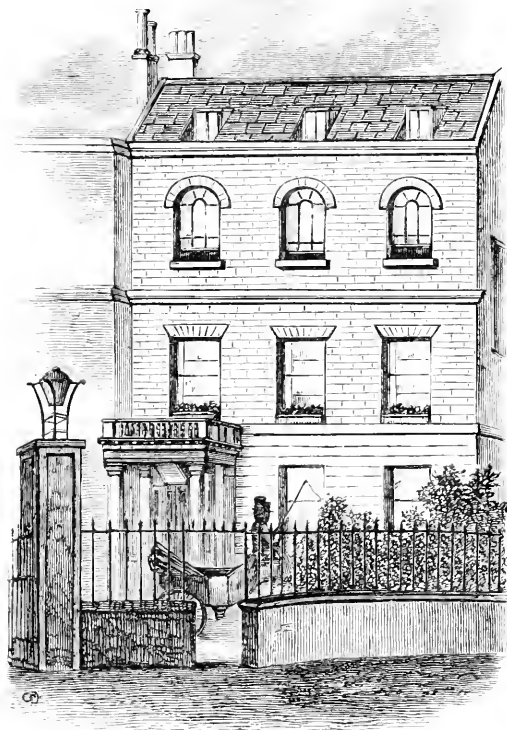
## CHAPTER IX.

## BLEAK HOUSE AND LITTLE DORRIT.

THE house which is here shown is in Tavistock Square, and while residing in it Dickens wrote *Bleak House and Little Dorrit* among other works, such as a *Child's History of England*, etc. All this part of London is suggestive of the great house of Bedford, who own vast wealth here. We have Tavistock Square, Bedford Square, Russell Square, Woburn Place, and many other reminders that the family to which was granted the great estates of Woburn Abbey are as much represented by the surroundings of the district as the house of Westminster is by Pimlico and Belgravia. The dwelling which is shown here was the residence of Dickens until the year 1860. He had resided in it for nearly ten years, and before he went to live there it was the residence of Mr. Perry, the once famous chief of the *Morning Post*. The monotony of this part of London is very striking, though it might surprise any curious inquirer if he saw the interiors of some of those monotonous houses. Once they were the abodes of the aristocracy, who crowded into London in



spring and summer, and there are chimney-pieces and ceilings of the early Hanoverian days, often inaccurately



TAVISTOCK HOUSE

described as being in "Queen Anne's style," and now again in great favour with the public, through the

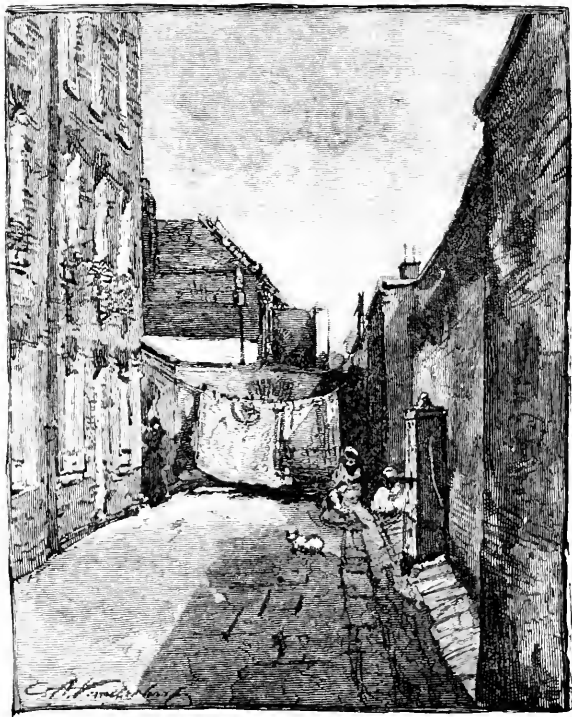
excellent skill of Mr. Norman Shaw, who recognised a merit in them that to me always seemed apparent. I say nothing of the weary unbroken façades we see in what we might call Woburnia, but only speak of the architectural details. The streets themselves, and the depressing effect of the architecture that frowns on them, are graphically described by Dickens in *Little Dorrit*, and there is no difficulty in supposing that he must have resided principally at home when he wrote the tale. "It was a Sunday evening in London, gloomy, close, and stale. Maddening church bells of all degrees of dissonance, sharp and flat, cracked and clear, fast and slow, made the brick and mortar echoes hideous. Melancholy streets in a penitential garb of soot steeped the souls of the people who were condemned to look at them out of windows, in dire despondency." Mr. Arthur Clennam, who was newly arrived from Marseilles by way of Dover and by the Dover coach, "The Blue-eyed Maid," was sitting in the window of a coffee-house in Ludgate Hill, and he was surrounded by "miles of houses, where the inhabitants gasped for air;" and yet, as he truly says, "Through the heart of the town a deadly sewer ebbed and flowed, in place of a fine fresh river."

Mr. Arthur Clennam was full of these reflections, and putting on his coat to shield him from a passing shower he could not but remember that "in the country the rain would have developed a thousand fresh scents, and every drop would have had its bright association with beautiful

forms of growth or life. In the city, it developed only foul stale smells, and was a sickly, lukewarm, dirt-stained wretched addition to the gutters."

"He crossed by Saint Paul's and went down at a long angle almost to the water's edge, through some of the crooked and descending streets which lie (and lay more crookedly and closely then) between the river and Cheapside. Passing now the mouldy hall of some obsolete worshipful company, now the illuminated windows of a congregationless church, that seemed to be waiting for some adventurous Belzoni to dig it out and discover its history ; passing silent warehouses and wharves, and here and there a narrow alley leading to the river where a wretched little bill, 'Found Drowned,' was weeping on the wet wall—he came at last to the house he sought. An old brick house, so dingy as to be all but black, standing by itself within a gateway. Before it a square courtyard, where a shrub or two and a patch of grass were as rank (which is saying much) as the iron railings enclosing them were rusty ; behind it a jumble of roots. It was a double house, with long, narrow, heavily-framed windows. Many years ago it had had it in its mind to slide down-ways ; it had been propped up, however, and was leaning on some half-dozen gigantic crutches ; which gymnasium for the neighbouring cats, weather-stained, smoke-blackened, and overgrown with weeds, appeared in these latter days to be no very sure reliance." But the "crooked and descending streets" that lie between the river and Cheap-

side are being really improved off the face of the city, and more commodious ones are taking their places. Queen Victoria Street is indeed one of the greatest improvements of modern London.



COURTYARD, MARSHALSEA.

In *Little Dorrit* the Marshalsea holds a very prominent place indeed ; and if we refer to Forster's *Life of Dickens*

we shall find that the incidents which he himself relates of his own experiences show how keenly he was alive to observe human nature, and even at an early age to begin to collect materials for his future career in literature.

There was, as it would appear, a meeting held by the inmates of the Marshalsea to devise the best means to forward a petition from the inmates to ask for a bounty to drink His Majesty's health on his forthcoming birthday, and commenting upon this he says: "I mention the circumstance because it illustrates, to me, my early interest in observing people. When I went to the Marshalsea of a night I was always delighted to hear from my mother what she knew about the histories of the different debtors in the prison; and when I heard of this approaching ceremony I was so anxious to see them all come in, one after another (though I knew the greater part of them already to speak to and they me), that I got leave of absence on purpose, and established myself in a corner near the partition. It was stretched out, I remember, on a great ironing board under the window, which, in another part of the room, made a bedstead at night. The internal regulations of the place for cleanliness and order, and for the government of a common room in the ale-house—where hot water, and some means of cooking, and a good fire, were provided for all who paid a very small subscription—were excellently administered by a governing committee of debtors, of which my father was chairman for the time being." Then there is a picture of Captain

Porter standing over the petition with dignity, as the unhappy petitioners filed in, and, as it were, taking possession of them and theirs when they entered the room to sign the momentous document. The Captain had, it would seem, felt the importance of the occasion, and had "washed himself," and when any one had the pen presented to him to affix his signature he was asked if he had heard it read, and if there was the slightest disposition to do so, or even if there happened to be a faint suspicion of wavering, Captain Porter at once took advantage.

In one of his works Dickens has said that people always enjoy themselves over any legal affirmation or oath,—perhaps such things are rather less in vogue now than they were,—but he says that all such expressions as "I do by these presents solemnly declare and avow," or "and I will hereafter well and truly and to the best of my ability and knowledge," give intense satisfaction.

If any hesitation appeared on the part of a signer of the petition Captain Porter at once cleared his throat and read it full from end to end, and he doubtless enjoyed himself over the opening sentence that set forth the "humble petition" in due legal phraseology, and the closing one that the "humble petitioners ever will pray," even though there is a little obscurity in the last promise.

Near the Marshalsea was the lodging-house and academy kept by Mr. Cripples, where old Frederick Dorrit and his niece had their home ; just across the road was a pie-shop, where Flora led Little Dorrit for conversation.

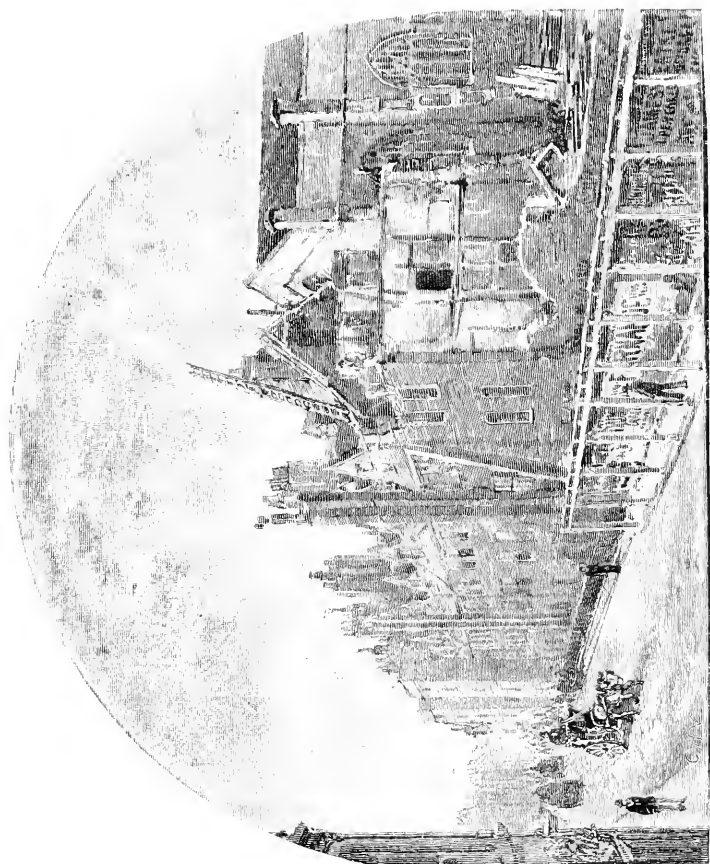
As for the prison itself, in the collected edition of Dickens he says, in the preface to *Little Dorrit*: "Some of my readers may have an interest in being informed whether or no any portions of the Marshalsea Prison are yet standing. I myself did not know until I was approaching the end of the story, when I went to look. I found the outer front courtyard often mentioned here metamorphosed into a butter shop, and then I almost gave up every brick of the jail as lost. Wandering, however, down a certain adjacent Angel Court leading to Bermondsey, I came to Marshalsea Place, the houses in which I recognised, not only as the great block of the former prison, but as preserving the rooms that arose in my mind's eye when I became Little Dorrit's biographer. Whoever goes into Marshalsea Place, turning out of Angel Court leading to Bermondsey, will find his foot in the very paving stones of the extinct Marshalsea Jail; will see its narrow yard to the right and to the left, very little altered if at all, except that the walls were lowered when the place got free; will look upon the rooms in which the debtors lived; and will stand among the crowding ghosts of many miserable years."

Southwark Bridge contends with Blackfriars the honour of being the handsomest bridge over the river. It rests on two piers, and the centre span of 402 feet was the widest in England until tubes were invented. On this bridge Little Dorrit loved to walk, because it was quieter than the others,—owing, doubtless, to its approaches being

less convenient—and here she saw Clennam for the first time, and felt attracted towards him. Here also young John, who had the excellent gift of seeing everything in a favourable light, and could transform a yard of drying clothes into a grove of trees by a happy effort of the imagination, declared his undying attachment to her.

Where Mr. Casby lived we cannot now discover, for the place has long since disappeared, but the description of it is a life-like picture of many suburbs of London, and indeed of many other suburbs of growing cities where country scenes and associations are being crowded out. Even Chester itself, where these lines are written, and which is a walled city, cannot prevent such transformation within its ancient gates, but occasionally a high wall that has perhaps for centuries shut out some fruit garden which lies within its enclosure, and possibly was at one time part of a monastic establishment, is removed. First the coping goes down, then, as course after course is lowered, the ancient pleasaunce is exposed to passers-by who never even knew of it. Gnarled old fruit-trees are open to the street, and then masons and bricklayers usurp the place and a new street is formed, and every trace of garden land is lost. This is, in a small scale, a picture of what John Casby used to see from his home. It was “in a street in the Gray’s Inn Road, which had set off from that thoroughfare with the intention of running at one heat down into the valley and up again to the top of Penton-





CHANCERY LANE.



ville Hill, but which had run itself out of breath in twenty yards, and had stood still ever since."

There is no such place as that now, but it remained there for many years, looking with a balked countenance at the wilderness patched with unfruitful gardens and pimpled with eruptive summer-houses.

Chancery Lane is in the very heart of legal London, or as I happen to remember a London youth, who seemed to be a very juvenile appendage to some legal firm, say to a suitor from the country who was quite at sea in the legal districts of the metropolis: "Go to Chancery Lane, sir; you must go there first before you can get anywhere;" and indeed to those who do not know which gateways to dive through, or which passages to disappear into, this is very far from being an unjust *résumé* of the merits of Chancery Lane.

This lane continually figures in the pages of Dickens, and the drawing of it that Mr. Vanderhoof has given fairly represents the centre of legal London, and there is not much probability that the vast new courts that now overshadow it will for a long time alter its character. Mr. Guppy can always be met with in Chancery Lane, carrying a blue bag and cordially fraternising with brother law clerks. He is quite an authority upon the restaurants of the neighbourhood, and can tell you exactly where the best value may be had for a shilling that is to be spent in lunch or dinner, and even knows the varying merits of each chop-house as it may happen to change in its

management. If one of these establishments is well conducted and has any specialty the proprietor is not far from fame and fortune. A case involving some law proceedings was before the public some little time since, and it appeared in evidence that a fortune of £45,000 had been accumulated in a building that can hardly have a frontage of more than eighteen feet to the street.

Clients waiting for their suits to be heard are generally hungry, and often, indeed, thirsty ; and lawyers' clerks are generally dexterous in the use of a knife and fork. Messrs. Jobling and Smallweed were taken by Mr. Guppy to a well-known grill, "one of the class known by its frequenters by the denomination of Slap Bang ;" and, as we may see in fifty houses in the neighbourhood, there was a "seductive show of artificially whitened cauliflowers in the windows, with poultry, and verdant baskets of greens, coolly-blooming cucumbers, and joints ready for the spit ;" and in the interior the guest was greeted with a "general flush and steam of hot joints, cut and uncut, and a considerably heated atmosphere, in which the soiled knives and table-cloths seemed to break out spontaneously into eruptions of grease and blotches of beer."

Thavie's Inn and Clifford's Inn also figure in this vicinity, and at the former Esther Summerson, Ada Clare, and Richard Carstone passed their first night in London under the roof of Mrs. Jellaby. Mr. Guppy, who well knew how to cut off corners, and find his road in London, described Thavie's Inn as being "round the corner. We

just twist up Chancery Lane and cut along Holborn, and there we are, in four minutes' time, as near as a toucher."

Clifford's Inn, which stands in the opposite of Chancery Lane, is so called from Robert Clifford, who lived in the time of Edward II., and to whom the lands upon which it stands were devised. The entrance to it is from Fetter Lane, which contains yet some curious specimens of old London architecture that were evidently before Dickens when he wrote some of the descriptions of the antique parts of the city.

Though it is somewhat in the background, Clifford's Inn has not a few histories to relate. After the great fire of London Sir Matthew Hale and seventeen other judges sat to adjust the claims of the landlords and tenants of the burned districts ; and, difficult as this task was, they are said to have completed it to the entire satisfaction of all parties concerned !

But *Bleak House* is principally intended to draw attention to the law's delays ; and the estate of Mr. Carstone, when it was placed at his disposal beyond doubt, was of no value to him. After many years of litigation the document turned up that settled every point, and would have done so in the first instance, but some £80,000, the value of the property, was sunk in expenses. It is generally said that the Jarndyce case was suggested to Dickens by the well-known one of *Martin v. Earl Beauchamp*—a case that appeared, disappeared, and re-appeared, for a period of about eighty years, and when

young Dickens was engaged in doing some work connected with it as a law writer.

Mr. Tangle, who was always concerned in the Jarndyce case, was a well-known character, and he could be seen any day at one o'clock enjoying a lunch of fried oysters; or, if it were summer, he would be discussing a lobster or chicken salad and imbibing stout, though that in strictly correct quantities.

This restaurant yet stands at the end of Chancery Lane, and fully maintains its ancient fame.

But there are many other life-like characters in the environs of Chancery Lane that appear in Dickens; and notably among others Mr. Snagsby, the law stationer, who has dealt in every form of legal process, "skins and rolls of parchment; in paper—foolscap, brief, draft, brown, whitey brown, and blotting; in stamps, in office-quills, pens, ink, indiarubber, etc. etc.;" and when the eminent lawyer, Mr. Tulkinghorn, called upon him to worm out the name of a law writer whom he wished to discover for very different reasons from those assigned, Mr. Snagsby's respect and veneration for the great man knew no bounds, though, even as he went out with him on business, he was obliged to conciliate his wife, for, as the narrative says, though Mr. and Mrs. Snagsby were of one bone and one flesh, "to the neighbours' thinking there was one voice too, which voice, of course, was that of Mrs. Snagsby." Chancery Lane was also the scene of the wanderings of Miss Flite, as she travelled from Court to

Court. She was an actual character, and had some real or fancied grievance, possibly a real one, but her actual story is not generally known. I remember on one occasion to have been in the Vice-Chancellor's Court (Lord Hatherley's), and when a case was closed this lady, who had been sitting behind, suddenly jumped up to address the bench; she was thin and energetic looking, but she had a dreamy eye. There was a slight hush in the court as she rose and called out in a shrill mechanical voice, "My Lord—may it please your Lordship to hear the humble petition of ——" I cannot now remember the name, but the Vice-Chancellor said, "Ah, this is not the day for hearing petitions." He knew her, of course, perfectly well, and called out to the clerk to read out the next case on the paper.

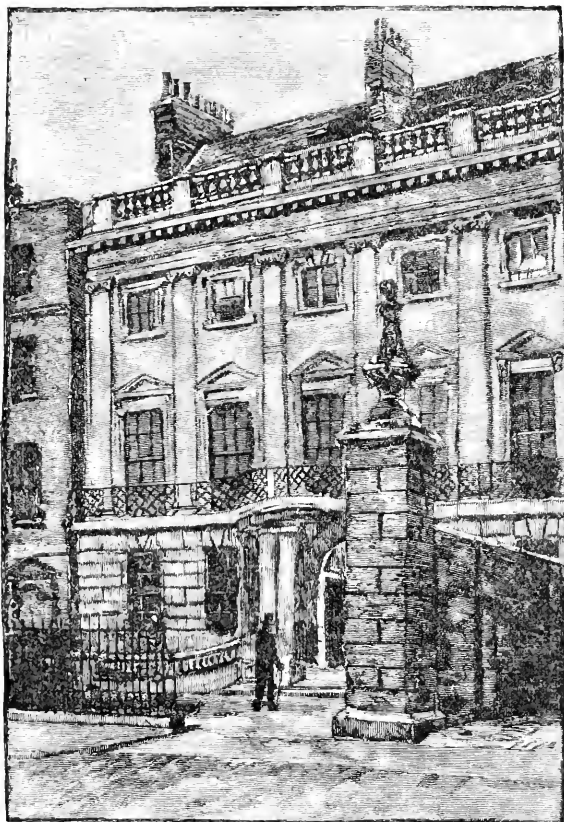
Lincoln's Inn was the scene of Miss Flite's daily peregrinations, and there were not many of the wigged gentry who were unfamiliar with her appearance and weaknesses. This Inn figures conspicuously through all of Dickens' works, but especially in *Bleak House*. The principal entrance is from Chancery Lane, and this was built soon after the battle of Bosworth Field; over it Oliver Cromwell once lived, and it is said that Ben Jonson worked at the wall as a bricklayer. Dickens brings, in a few words, the surroundings of Lincoln's Inn before our eyes: "Michaelmas Term lately over, and the Lord Chancellor sitting in Lincoln's Inn Hall." It was November weather, and there was so much mud in the

streets that in the murky gloom, that a palaeozoic lizard "some fifty feet long or so" might be expected "waddling up Holborn Hill." Dogs are simply undistinguishable; and on the London bridges it seemed as though the passengers "peeping over the parapets into a nether sky of fog" were up in a balloon, and hanging in the misty clouds; and in the "very heart of the fog sits the Lord High Chancellor in his High Court of Chancery."

Another picture is given of Lincoln's Inn Fields in Mr. Tulkinghorn's chambers; and this eminent lawyer sits in his rooms, where, indeed, he resides, and on a sultry summer's evening "a breeze from the country that has lost its way takes fright and makes a blind hurry to rush out again," leaving, however, its contribution of dust. Still, even Mr. Tulkinghorn can enjoy a bottle of very old port which he brings up from some priceless bin in some artful cellar under the Fields, and enjoys it after a dinner served from some neighbouring chop-house to his chambers. These chamber lodgers are not quite so common as formerly, but a few of the old-fashioned sort yet exist. Lincoln's Inn at night, however, is the same as ever, the "perplexed and troublous valley of the shadow of the law." The bell that rings at nine o'clock "has ceased its dolorous clangour about nothing." It is only in "dirty upper casements here and there are little hazy patches of candle-light," where the denizens are toiling on at parchments—who work, "though office hours be past, that they may give for every day some good account at last."



Mr. Tulkinghorn's house has been identified as No. 58

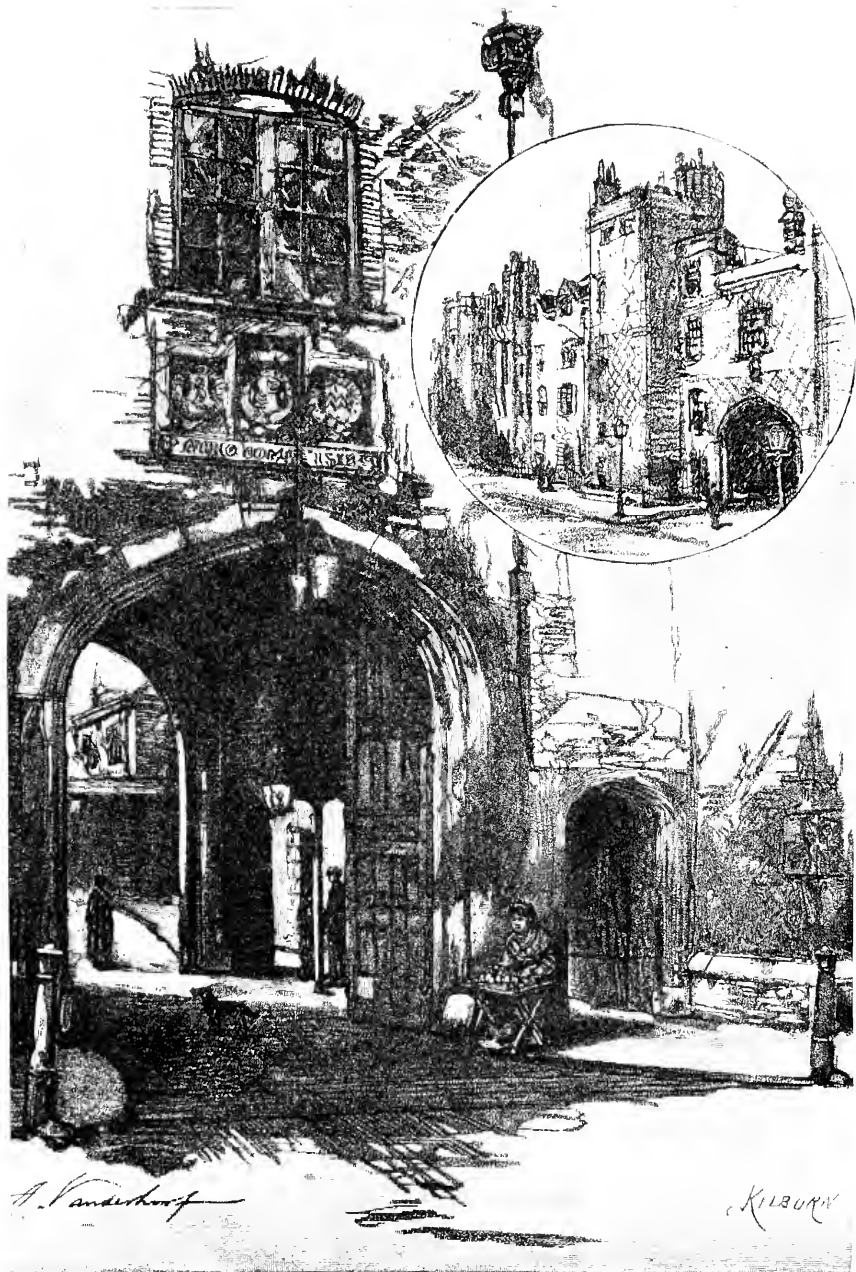


58 LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

Lincoln's Inn Fields in the following words: "Our immediate visit showed that number on the door of one

of these two houses. As we had already suspected, he had taken the house in which Forster had lived, and with which he was so familiar as the residence of Tulkinghorn, and if any further corroborative proof was needed it was unexpectedly stumbled on by one of these identifiers. Let the reader turn to Maclise's sketch, in the *Life*, of the gathering in Forster's chambers to hear Dickens read his new Christmas story, *The Chimney*. He had come on from Italy for this reading prior to publication, having written Forster to invite Carlyle, Jerrold, Maclise, Stanfield, and others, to hear him, in that delightful letter, beginning 'Now, if you was a real gent.' Maclise made a sketch of the room and its inmates, and there, in the left-hand corner, you shall still see the very frescoes—weird figures with waving arms and pointing fingers—which Dickens placed with such ghastly effect on Tulkinghorn's ceiling."

The gateway to Lincoln's Inn which faces Chancery Lane is a very fine piece of brick architecture, and some of the older parts of the square are perfect models of artistic brickwork, and show what can be made out of a material that hardly any one can use now with anything like good effect. Hampton Court, St. James's Palace, and the older parts of Lincoln's Inn, afford examples of the way artists can handle bricks, a building material that even the Romans were enamoured with, and employed when the best building stone was at hand, but which in the present day we use no better than in the flat front of a terrace with square windows. Lincoln's Inn received its



LINCOLN'S INN GATEWAY. 1

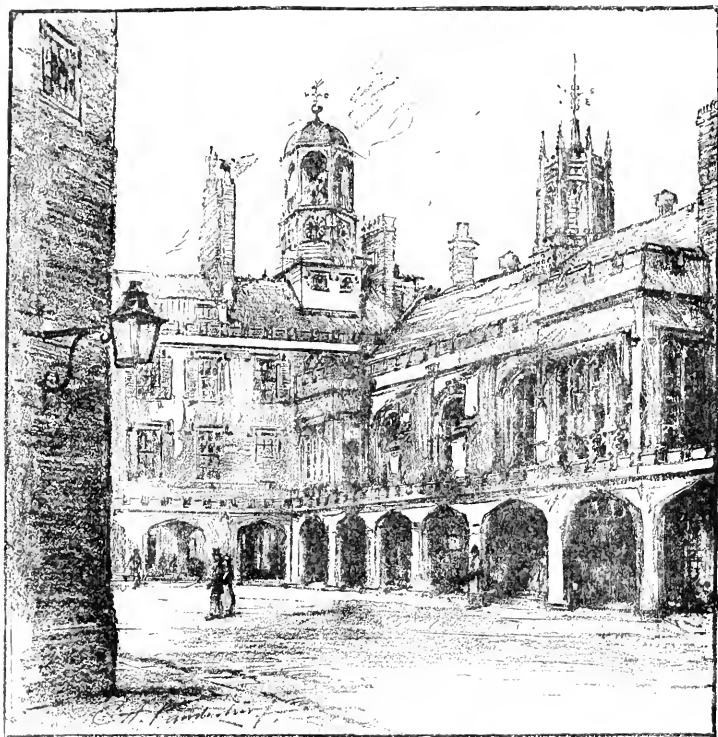


name from Henry de Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, who died in the year 1312. It is built on the site of his old town house. The chapel on the right of the entrance was designed by Inigo Jones at about the same time that he built the towers of Westminster, and they have every indication of being the work of the same hand. He had the good taste to admire the architecture of the Tudors, but it had ceased to be employed in buildings, except, perhaps, in some remote country church; and we see that he only was acquainted with the principles of Italian architecture. The stained glass windows are very good, and honest Mr. Pepys used to find great consolation under the sort of open crypt above which the chapel stands. These windows represented different saints, and Mr. Hare notices that Archbishop Laud thought it curious that his own stained glass windows at Lambeth should be so much abused when those at Lincoln's Inn were allowed to pass unnoticed, and yet he thinks it best, on very general principles, not to say anything about it, "lest he should thereby set some furious spirit at work to destroy those harmless goodly windows to the just dislike of that worthy society."

The Hall of Lincoln's Inn was built when Dickens was in the height of his prosperity, and when he was producing his very best works. Next to Westminster, it is probably the finest hall in London. It is 120 feet in length, 45 in breadth, and 64 feet high. The screen is a very elaborate piece of work, and the roof is

rich and costly. At the northern end of the hall is a painting in fresco by Watts, R.A.—“The Lawgivers.” But all the classical associations of Lincoln’s Inn will receive a shock when the law courts are removed to the vast building that now occupies so large a porion of the Strand. It is, indeed, in a sanitary point of view, a great improvement to this part of the city; alleys and lanes, that it seems almost incredible were ever in the midst of the Metropolis, have been swept away, and a space of some seven acres secured for a great court-house, where law will be almost remodelled, and where some new Dickens must arise to invest its routine with the romance that hangs about the old courts of Lincoln’s Inn. How far the new buildings will commend themselves to the public taste time must show. The designer is no more; he has done excellent work in his time, and he may have calculated upon the chemistry of a London atmosphere, for all I know correctly, to give his last work repose and harmony.

In Chancery Lane is an old quadrangle containing the Rolls court and chapel; the latter is a building that abounds with classic associations. Donne, Atterbury, and the learned Butler were all preachers, and Burnet was dismissed by the restored king for preaching a sermon upon the text, “Save me from the lion’s mouth, thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorn.” The little chapel contains one of the noblest pieces of sculpture in England, this is the recumbent figure of Dr. John Young,



HALL OF LINCOLN'S INN.





Master of the Rolls in Henry VIII.'s time. Every line in this grand piece of sculpture speaks of repose, and there is a quiet lofty dignity that, as it were, seems to linger to the last over the handsome features. The effigy and the sarcophagus on which it rests are the works of Torregiani, and the master who so literally sleeps in cold dull marble is worthy even of his chisel. Amongst other masters that lie buried here is Sir John Strange, on whom the epitaph was written,—

“Here lies an honest lawyer, that is Strange.”

## CHAPTER X.

## MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD.

*Edwin Drood* opens with the interior of an opium den where John Jaspar was lying on a bed in company with a besotted Chinaman and a Lascar, all of them under the influence of opium vapour. The visions of Jaspar are quite characteristic of a man recovering from his dream, and he saw the tower of Rochester Cathedral mingling with fantastic Eastern scenes, and a hook or spike where the sultan used to impale Turkish robbers. All this was mixed with revelry, and dancing girls, and banqueting, while the iron spike still remained before him supported in mid-air. White elephants in endless procession, richly caparisoned, with cymbals clashing all round them, fill in the lurid picture. Still through all this the tower of Rochester, which he knows has no right to be there, rises clearly up in the distance over and above all the heterogeneous scenes. The opium "den," as such places are called, we learn from Charles Dickens's admirable *Guide to London*, is situated near Ratcliffe Highway, in a garret kept by a man called Johnstone, though his real name, or at least one that more



CLIFFORD'S INN.



accurately described him, was "John Chinaman." Here, for the consideration of a shilling, a sailor or any customer may smoke his pipe, and dream the hours away.

The site is so clearly known that a visitor to London purchased the bed upon which John Jaspar lay with his smoke-dried companions, and this enthusiastic relic-hunter had it safely transported to his home in America. The proprietor of this den is himself so imbued with the smoke of opium that, after a lapse of years, he has become, as we may say, thoroughly acclimatised to it, and a breeze of country air would be intolerable to him even on a day in June. Indeed, in the *Guide to London* Dickens mentions that he suddenly closed the grimy window with as honest a shudder as he himself felt the fumes and opened it. The first chapter of the last work of Dickens deals with the temporary delights of opium, which have such appalling penalties, and result in a delirium worse even than that which alcohol can inflict. When the "opium demon" has fairly taken hold of a man, human aid is at an end, and, utterly prostrate, he must linger on till death releases him. Supported by the drug that has undone him, and with eyes that glare like those of a wild animal, he is of no further use, and he must bide his time. Those who have read De Quincey's *Confessions of an Opium-eater* will remember how terribly the effects are described, and I am almost reminded of an incident that occurred within sight of the window where these lines were written. All visitors to the ancient city of Chester will remember the grand

old abbey church of St. John's, which has seen seven hundred summers, and was once the cathedral of Chester ; near it are magnificent remains of carved work that once formed the bosses, and capitals, and enrichments of the wealthy abbey.

A house was built out of some of these remains, and, but that all is on too large a scale, the place might well stand for that where little Nell found a resting-place after life's brief but fitful struggle. In this house at one time De Quincey the opium-eater lived and wrote ; and in the year 1880, on the eve of Good Friday, it may be remembered that the great tower fell without a moment's warning, and its many tons of *débris* covered the site of the house where De Quincey lived.

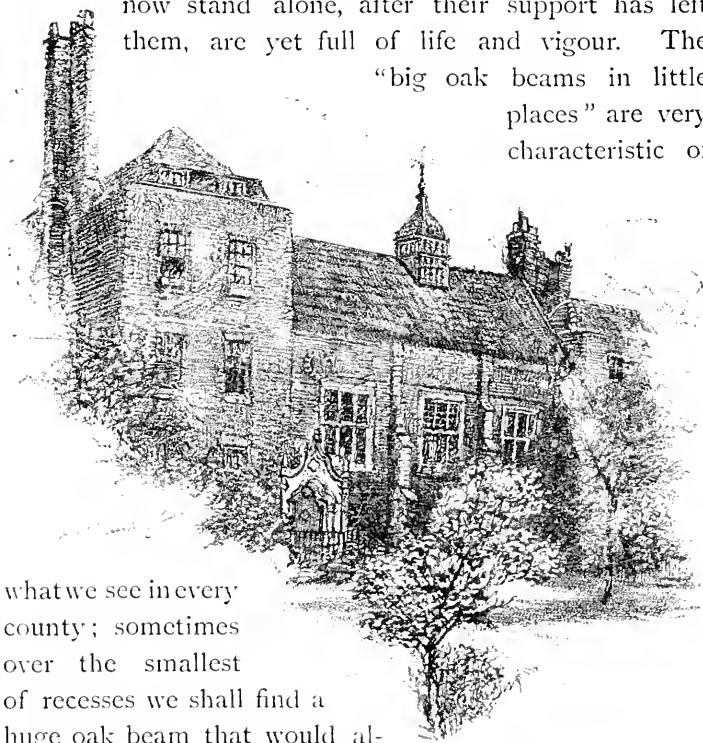
There is a fine description of Rochester Cathedral after the bell had ceased ringing for afternoon service. Jaspar had heard the "unintelligible" mutterings of the crazy inmates he left behind him, and had presence of mind enough left to grope his way down the stairs, and "give a good morning to some rat-ridden doorkeeper in a bed in a black hutch beneath the stairs, and pass out." He went on to Rochester, and in the same afternoon "the bells are going for daily vesper service, and he needs attend it, one would say, from his haste to reach the open cathedral door. The choir are getting on their sullied white robes, in a hurry, when he arrives among them, gets on his own robe and falls into the procession filing into service. Then the sacristan locks the iron-

barred gates that divide the sanctuary from the chancel, and all of the procession having scuttled into their places, hide their faces; and then the intoned words, *When the twicked man*, rise among the groins of arches, and beams of roof, awakening muttered thunder." There are many beautiful descriptions of the pleasant nooks in a cathedral city, or such as may often be seen in an ancient market town where the parish church has been some part of one of the smaller abbeys or priories. One only must suffice out of many—it was in the cathedral close in the minor canon's quarter: "Red-brick walls harmoniously toned down in colour by time, strong-rooted ivy, latticed windows, panelled rooms, big oak beams in little places, and stone-walled gardens, where annual fruit yet ripened upon monkish trees, were the principal surroundings of pretty old Mrs. Crisparkle and the Rev. Septimus as they sat at breakfast."

There is no passage in all Dickens that more clearly shows his keen observation and delight in mute things, and a sympathy that did not stop with the phases of human life, deep as that was. Red-brick walls not only mellow with time, but artists say that even an old London brick wall is a study of colour, and that anywhere within a stone's-throw of St. Paul's or the Tower "strong-rooted ivy" is peculiarly applicable to the gnarled and knotted roots we see curling round and under ancient masonry; and yet, as he says, "annual fruit ripen on monkish trees," and this long after the supports to which they

have clung have disappeared. I know one garden in Cheshire, and one in Shropshire, attached to old farm buildings that once were parts of a priory, where espaliers in perfect growth that followed some cloister wall, and now stand alone, after their support has left them, are yet full of life and vigour. The

“big oak beams in little places” are very characteristic of



THE NOOK OF STAPLE INN.

what we see in every county; sometimes over the smallest of recesses we shall find a huge oak beam that would almost carry a cathedral tower, and is fifty times as strong almost as its little duties require; but the fact is, that the



country was so full of heavy wood, in forests and parks, that men could afford to be lavish, and it cost almost less to place the great beam where it stands than to reduce it.

Staple Inn in Holborn is just such a place as Dickens in his happiest moments delighted in, and it appears by name or by implication again and again in his pages. "Behind the most ancient part of Holborn, London, where certain gabled houses, some centuries of age, still stand looking on the public way, as if disconsolatory, looking for the old bourne that has long since run dry, is a little nook composed of two irregular quadrangles called Staple Inn. It is one of those nooks the turning into which out of the clashing streets imparts to the relieved pedestrian the sensation of having put cotton in his ears and velvet soles to his boots. It is one of those nooks where a few smoky sparrows twitter in smoky trees, as though they called to each other, 'Let us play at country,' and where a few feet of garden mould, and a few yards of gravel, enable them to do that refreshing violence to their tiny understandings. Moreover, it is one of those nooks which are legal nooks, and it contains a little hall with a little lantern in its roof, to what obstructive purposes devoted and at whose expense this history knoweth not. Mr. Grewgious himself occupied a set of chambers in a corner house, in the little inner quadrangle presenting in black and white over its ugly portal the mysterious inscription :—

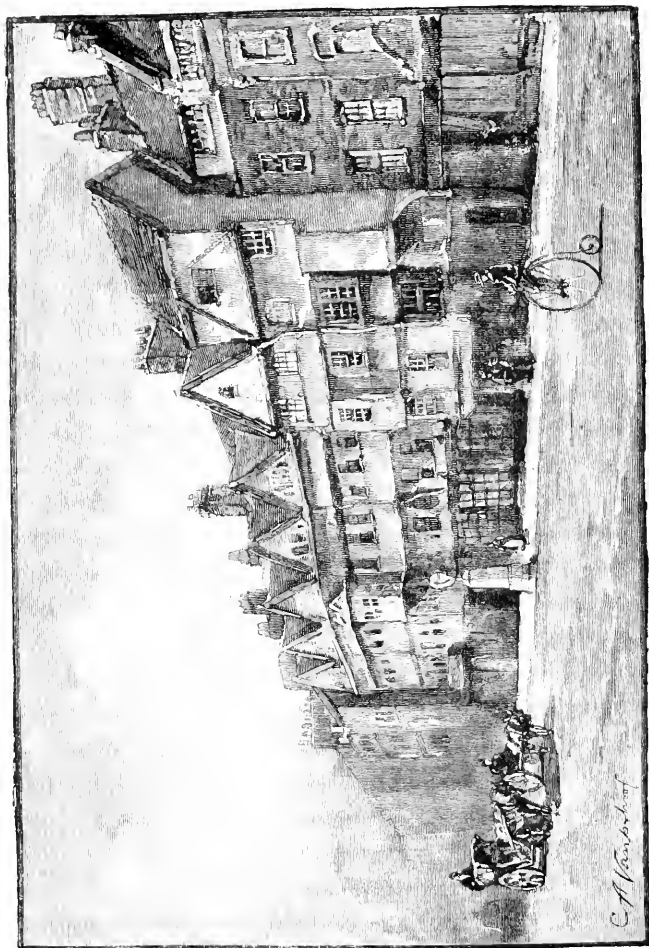
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In which set of chambers never having troubled his head about the inscription, unless to bethink himself at odd times on glancing up at it that haply it might mean, 'perhaps John Thomas,' or 'perhaps Joe Tyler,' sat Mr. Grewgious writing by the fire." This place is indeed a perfect preserve of sparrows, and swallows seem to linger here when they have left even the London parks. There is another description of chambers in Staple Inn, where Mr. Neville Landless lived and studied, and it is a picture of exceeding comfort and cosiness. He took himself to Staple Inn, but not the P. J. T. of Mr. Grewgious. Full many a creaking stair he climbed before he reached some attic rooms in a corner, turned the latch of their unbolted door, and stood beside the table of Neville Landless.

"An air of retreat and solitude hung about the rooms and about their inhabitant. He was much worn, and so were they. Their sloping ceilings, cumbrous rusty locks and grates, with heavy wooden bins and beams slowly mouldering withal, had a prisonous look, and he had the haggard face of a prisoner. Yet the sunlight shone in at the ugly garret window, which had a penthouse to itself thrust out among the tiles, and on the cracked and smoke-blackened parapet beyond, some of the deluded sparrows of the place rheumatically hopped, like little feathered



STAILE INN.



cripples who had left their crutches in their nests, and there was a play of living leaves at hand that changed the air, and made an imperfect sort of music in it that would have been melody in the country. Hawthorne describes the singular feeling of stillness and repose in this courtyard, which contrasts so thoroughly with all its surroundings and is immediately lost when Holborn is regained. The small hall at Staple Inn is exceedingly picturesque, with its open roof, and stained windows, and ancient portraits. When Dr. Johnson left Gough Square he took up his abode at Staple Inn, and here he wrote *Rasselas*. The front to Holborn, which is here shown, is one of the most picturesque façades in London. It seems to date back to the early part of James I.'s reign, and its quaint overhanging gables are full of light and shade. An hotel near Aldersgate is spoken of here. "It is a hotel, boarding-house, or lodging-house at its visitor's option." This is the place that was frequented by John Jasper on the occasions of his visits to London, and about this locality and St. Paul's Churchyard are many similar ones. "This accommodating place" announces itself in the new railway advertisers as a novel enterprise, timidly beginning to spring up. It bashfully, almost apologetically, gives the traveller to understand that it does not expect him, on the good old constitutional hotel plan, to order a pint of sweet blacking for his drinking, and throw it away; but insinuates that he may have his boots blacked instead of his stomach, and may also have bed, breakfast,

attendance, and a porter up all night, for a certain fixed charge. From these and similar premises, many true Britons in the lowest spirits deduce that the times are levelling times, except in the article of highroads, of which there will shortly be not one in England." Institutions similar to this may be found in the pages of *Bradshaw*, and many of them are very comfortable indeed, and if one of them only gets a name for anything that is a little better than its neighbour can boast of, whether it is chops, or Yarmouth bloaters, or bottled stout, the owner's fortune is not far off.

The *Mystery of Edwin Drood* must close with one more quotation, which is a description of Cloisterham on a warm summer's day. The "transparency of the walls" that is alluded to is a very accurate picture of the solid walls of an old building when, as it were, it is bathed in sunlight, and is an effect that we do not see in a new building. "Cloisterham is so bright and sunny in these summer days that the cathedral and the monastery ruin show as if their strong walls were transparent. A soft glow seems to shine from within them rather than upon them from without, such is their mellowness as they look forth on the hot cornfields and the smoking roads that distantly wind among them. The Cloisterham gardens blush with ripening fruit. Time was when travel-stained pilgrims rode in clattering parties through the city's welcome shades ; time is when wayfarers, leading a gipsy life between hay-making time and harvest, and looking as

if they were just made of the dust of the earth, so very dusty are they, lounge about on cool door-steps, trying to mend their unmendable shoes, or giving them to the city kennels as a hopeless job, and seeking others in the bundles they carry, along with their yet unused sickles swathed in bands of straw. At all the more public pumps there is much cooling of bare feet, together with much bubbling and gurgling of drinking with hand to spout on the part of these Bedouins; the Cloisterham police meanwhile looking askant from their beats with suspicion, and manifest impatience that the intruders should depart from within the civic bound, and once more fry themselves on the simmering roads."

## CHAPTER XI.

## A HOUSE AND SOME CHARACTERS.

FURNIVAL'S INN was always a favourite place with Dickens. Here simple honest John Westlock had his chambers which so astonished Tom Pinch with their completeness; and Rosebud took up her quarters here instead of Staple Inn. But it deserves especial notice from the circumstance that it was here that Dickens had his early home. He lived here as a reporter for some time before he was connected with the press. It was here that he wrote his *Sketches by Boz*, and, beyond all, it was here that he commenced his great career as an author, by writing the *Pickwick Papers*.

The central figure of the group facing this is Mr. Pickwick, and though Dickens himself was not always satisfied with his production of the philosopher, he it was that gave him his first start in life. When he heard that a brother of St. Bernard was going to read it he said, "What a humbug he will think me." Mr. Pickwick had been in business in London, and retired upon an ample competence. At the Bardell trial Mr. Snubbin says, "I





DICKENS CHARACTERS.



have no objection to admit, my lord, if it will save the examination of another witness, that my client has retired



HOUSE IN FURNIVAL'S INN.

from business, and is a gentleman of considerable independent property." One almost fears that the discoverer

of *Bil Stumps His Mark* would hardly be a suitable man to trust among the buyers and sellers of this world, yet it by no means follows that he was not a steady sound man of business. "His money always was as good as the bank—always," is the willing testimony of Mrs. Bardell; and it is probable that he would at any rate have looked well after the internal economy of an office, even if he did not undertake some of the departments that belong to buying and selling,—not that there is any necessary reason why he should not have been able to hold his own even there. Weller, of course, is always spoken of in connection with him, and their relations were rather peculiar for master and man. Still Weller was exceedingly faithful, and had precisely the ready wit that made him of use to Mr. Pickwick. Indeed, the two Wellers and Pickwick are the real characters in the book; Mr. Snodgrass, the poet; Mr. Winkle, the sportsman; and Mr. Tupman, the impressionable, are very minor characters, and hardly rise to being even amusing. Weller is a slightly exaggerated specimen of the sharp Londoner who is yet to be met with. Omnibuses have kept them alive, though they have not preserved the class of which his parent was a type. Old Tony Weller is a fine example of the English stage-coachman now no more. He fairly loved his calling, and, indeed, to a man who was fond of horses, and the pleasurable excitement of a ride, which had its merits in any weather, for he was provided accordingly, such a life had many attractions. There is a tale of an old coachman

who drove out of London, and who had for more than quarter of a century never missed a trip or had been behind time, and when he asked for a holiday to celebrate his twenty-fifth wedding-day it was freely granted by his employers, and a substitute found to fill his place ; but at starting time, when the deputy came, he found the old coachman on the box. He had puzzled what he should do, and how he could best spend his holiday, and found that his old way of life had the greatest of all attractions for him.

Mr. Sergeant Buzfuz and Mr. Snubbin are well enough drawn, but they only appear in the scene for a moment. Mr. Perker is a very good example of a safe methodical London lawyer, such as we might find any day in the neighbourhood of any of the Inns of court ; and if we read the police reports it is to be feared that Dodson and Fogg are not quite an unknown type of practitioner ; indeed, there may be even some almost of a more exceptionable character, for they seem to have been prosperous, and were far too wide-awake to use a client's money in speculation, or to put themselves within the pale of the law. We must remark that everything has changed so much since *Pickwick* was written that many things which passed without comment in those days would cause us some little astonishment at present. Perhaps a gentleman would consider at least twice before he went into a tavern with his servant, if something had gone wrong, and beguiled dull care with a tumbler of hot brandy and

water, while the servant refreshed himself with stout. Again, the too hilarious state of Mr. Pickwick and all his followers at Dingley Dell is told with more gusto than any one would use in describing it now. But we must remember that Dickens painted things very much as he saw them ; and as Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* has preserved pictures of the magistracy and the hierarchy of his day (which were not contemplated, indeed, by the author), and Smollett and Fielding have left records of their time, Dickens has portrayed the daily life that he saw around him. It has been objected that he was too needlessly sarcastic upon the temperance lecturers of the day, and the class of local preachers of which Stiggins was a type, or perhaps a burlesque. Uphill work they had, and much good they often did. To deny that there were self-seekers among them, and to assert that they were all actuated by no desire to provide scrip for their journey, would be as rash as to say that the *nolo episcopari* of an English bishop was always a genuine outpouring of one who had resolved to be shod with sandals, and to put no money in his purse. Still one thinks that Stiggins has had scanty justice, and as that appeared to be the case soon after he came before the public, it is but fair to let Dickens speak for himself. He writes to a Mr. David Dickson, who has found fault with the way in which he treats the subject : " Sir—Permit me to say, in reply to your letter, that you do not understand the intention (I daresay the fault is mine) of that passage in the *Pickwick*

*Papers* which has given you offence. The design of 'The Shepherd,' and of this, and of every other allusion to him, is to show how sacred things are degraded, vulgarised, and rendered absurd, when persons who are utterly incompetent to teach the commonest things take upon themselves to expound such mysteries, and how, in making cant phrases of Divine words, these persons miss the spirit in which they had their origin. I have seen a great deal of this sort of thing in many parts of England, and I never knew it lead to charity or good deeds. . . . That every man who seeks heaven must be born again, in good thoughts of his Maker, I sincerely believe. That it is expedient for every hound to say so in a certain snuffling form of words, to which he attaches no good meaning, I do not believe."

In *Nicholas Nickleby* the best characters are Mrs. Nickleby and Mantalini. They are the most artistically drawn by far. Squeers is simply a cruel brute who overdoes himself by his wickedness, and the usurers, Gridle and Ralph Nickleby, are not very difficult to draw; Nicholas and Kate are most estimable and very sensible, and we must go to the subtleties of the Darwinian theory to know how it happens that such parents—as we learn from Ralph Nickleby what his brother was, and we know what Mrs. Nickleby was—could have had such a clever family; but, on the other hand, we continually see the cleverest of parents the progenitors of youths who do not rank high even among the mediocrities of life. Mrs. Squeers is also a character that will live; she is very

much like Sally Brass in her way of life and her estimate of right and wrong, but she is rather more natural.

“‘He’ll take a meal with us to-night,’ said Squeers, ‘and go among the boys to-morrow morning. You can give him a shake-down here to-night, can’t you?’

“‘We must manage it somehow,’ replied the lady. ‘You don’t much mind how you sleep, I suppose, sir?’

“‘No, indeed,’ replied Nicholas ; ‘I am not particular.

“‘That’s lucky,’ said Mrs. Squeers ; and, as the lady’s humour was considered to lie chiefly in retort, Mr. Squeers laughed heartily, and seemed to expect that Nicholas should do the same.”

And again, when Mrs. Squeers was asked for her opinion about Nicholas, she said to her husband : “‘Oh, that Knuckleboy, I hate him ;’” and at once she shut up Mr. Squeers, who rather gently said, “‘But why?’” with “‘What’s that to you ? if I hate him that’s enough, ain’t it?’” and the estimable lady said further that he was “a proud, haughty, consequential, turned-up-nosed peacock.”

Her spouse seemed rather to deprecate the vehemence of the outbreak, and said—

“‘He’s cheap, my dear, the young man is very cheap.’

“‘Not a bit of it,’ retorted Mrs. Squeers ; ‘he’s dear if you don’t want him ; I don’t see that you want him any more than the dead—don’t tell me. You can put in the cards and in the advertisements : “Education by Mr. Wackford Squeers and able assistants” without having



any assistants, can't you? Isn't it done every day by all the masters about? I've no patience with you."

The rest of this conversation in the ninth chapter is very full both of humour and character; indeed she is the presiding spirit of Dotheboys Hall.

Mrs. Nickleby is essentially an opposite character. Her dreams of Kate's great match with Sir Mulberry Hawk of Mulberry Castle, North Wales—"only daughter of Nicholas Nickleby, Esquire, of Devonshire"—and the poetic lines that she conjured up as appearing in some annual in honour of her daughter, with a possible allusion to herself that might bring an admirer, are true to the life. Then her gliding off from one subject to another without the slightest connection, and her constant references to the silver spoons and ancient grandeur of her family, are all in keeping with the luckless lady—for a lady she always was through all her vicissitudes.

The original of Nicholas Nickleby himself, as we learn from an article in the *Literary World*, was a teacher of music on the Hullah system, and was well known in Manchester.

At the top of the sheet, on the left-hand side, is the immortal Bumble and his forlorn charge, Oliver; and it is only fair to add that the fame of Dickens will go down to posterity on the strength of the portraits that this sheet contains; for there are those who would wish that he had never written another work after *Copperfield*. In the *Literary World* a writer who reviews Professor Ward's

work on Dickens, and speaks of the reaction that followed his popularity, has said, when alluding to an excess of his fame: "Twenty years ago, to take one illustration, every one in the universities who read novels at all read Dickens from end to end, and quoted him and imitated him without measure or restraint. The state of things is altered now. Few undergraduates are conversant even with the superficial elements of Pickwickian lore, and not many months since it was our lot to meet one evening six scholars of a college not altogether given over to mathematics, and itself not without honour in fiction, of whom not one was familiar with more than the mere name of Samuel Weller and the Deputy Shepherd. Though this is an extreme case of ignorance, yet it illustrates the tendency of the day. Such an ebb of popularity cannot be lasting, and when the dross is cleared away Dickens must secure a permanent place among the great masters of English fiction."

Now it is hardly excusable that even assiduous students at a university should be ignorant of the characters here alluded to any more than they might be of Dominic Sampson or Major Pendennis. It must always be borne in mind that in his later works Dickens has introduced characters that perhaps may not be so generally known. "To be ignorant of the poets of one's country denotes indolence," a Roman moralist once said; but though we may all admit this, we can hardly attach much blame to any one who is not familiar with Mr. Veneering or Mr.

Podsnap or Mr. Boffin. These characters were delineated at his last residence at Gadshill, and it may be that he was away from the old sources of his inspiration, or it may be that perhaps a little of the old cunning had left his pen ; at any rate in his days of wealth and well-earned



GADSHILL.

prosperity the characters he has portrayed do not leave the same impressions as those that he created in his earlier days. Even Mr. Grewgious or John Jaspar or Mr. Neville Landless are not exactly familiar characters with many to whom Weller and Codlins are quite household words.

Among some reviewers it has been said that Peck-

sniff is an overdrawn, unnatural character, and that any one so transparent could not be supposed to gain any confidence. Nothing, however, is more astonishing than the facility with which pretension and cunning will be accepted by the public, especially in a professional man. Let us only consider how often a foreigner becomes a lion if he can only look wise and adhere to broken English. When Pecksniff undertook to transform Martin Chuzzlewit's drawing of the school into a fine design by a few touches—"the hand of a master"—which touches were adding a window and sub-cornice or some such device, there are many more clients that would than would not have believed him; and then this eternal self-puffing has a very imposing effect upon more than the half of mankind. It is recorded on very good authority that a Russian who was in needy circumstances, but who possessed a good suit of clothes, made quite a comfortable income in the vicinity of London by teaching music and singing, though he could neither play a tune nor sing a song.

Pecksniff is no more overdrawn than the mistress of a London boarding-school who never teaches, and who never could, but who makes an abundant income out of a straight figure, a clear complexion, hair slightly inclining to gray, and a double gold pebble glass. This picture is at least drawn from life. The young ladies, who paid what many clergymen would consider an ample income, were obliged to speak French, a language the governesses understood perfectly, and when the pupils were ushered at some indefinite

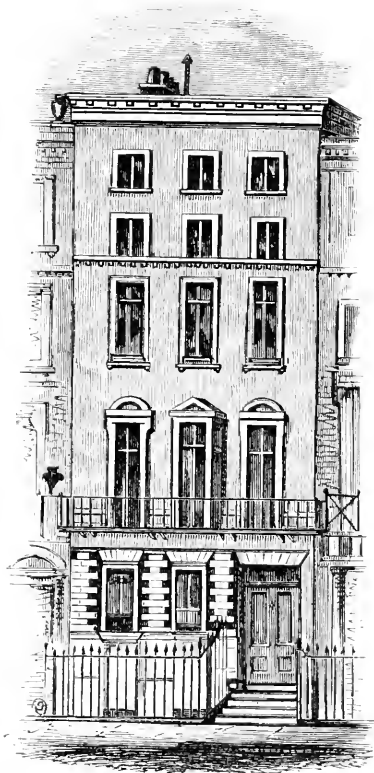
period into the august presence of the mistress—if, indeed, that is the correct word—they in their simplicity addressed her in that language. But she, with great impatience, stopped them and said that their accent simply shocked her, and if they wished to be understood they must address her in English. And this was quite true, for it was exceedingly doubtful if she could have asked her way from the Tuileries to the Louvre. Now here is a simple statement of fact, and yet this woman had applications from all parts of England for the privilege of placing some young lady under her charge. Is Pecksniff any more incredible? But Dickens says that he is drawn from an actual character, which, indeed, there is no difficulty in crediting. He says that what is called long sight perceives on a prospect innumerable features that do not appear to short-sighted people, and he had in his eye a model when he drew Pecksniff, and this model would be shocked if he were shown his portrait.

Mr. Skimpole, of course, is Leigh Hunt. Hunt did not see the likeness, but some considerate friends pointed it out for him, and he was deeply hurt, saying that Dickens had no right so to treat an old acquaintance; and though Dickens said all he could to make amends—"I take it at its worst, and say I am deeply sorry, and that I feel I did wrong in doing it"—the injury was done, and Hunt could never forget it. Dickens even went so far as to admit to Hunt that his own father and mother figured in his works.

Mr. Micawber will be recognised at once on the right of Mr. Pecksniff, as the humorous Mrs. Gamp is on the architect's left hand. Pinch is behind him, and the expression is well preserved. He is by no means an impossible though perhaps not a common character. We might find a dozen Pecksniffs for one character even approaching Tom Pinch. The dwarf Quilp, who is behind Mr. Pickwick, is quite exceptional, and for myself I do not remember to have met with any character that he resembles; there may be such persons, and perhaps there are, but certainly they are not common. Swiveller, however, who has struck up a kind of grotesque friendship with him, is among the very best drawn of all Dickens's characters. Under the dwarf are Nell and her grandfather. He at least is eminently natural, and believes that he must at last make a great fortune by gaming. He robs poor Nell of the trifle she has put by, and of course it goes at once when he sits down with gamblers. The same infatuation may be seen any time at races. In Chester, where the iniquity is focused, it is quite common for some one with fair prospects to turn their backs on all sense and experience and go to certain destruction on race week. An old proverb says that "experience makes fools wise," but what a change in the world, and what a change for the better, there would be if it did.

Cuttle with his hook occupies the lowest part of the sheet. Steamboats and a higher education have done much to alter the class of ship captains now, and we must

look for him among coasters or Glasgow schooners. Still we find, in any service, from the royal navy to the mackerel boat, true, honest, kindly tars, that are the happiest when they are doing a generous, kindly action.



The residence of the Right Hon. Milner Gibson, rented by Dickens when he wrote some parts of *Edwin Drood*. He took it for six months, from November to May 1870, and died at Gadshill the month after his tenancy expired.





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